THE GARDEN OF DERVISHES

SHEIKH MUZAFFER OZAK AL-JERRAHI

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Sheikh Muzaffer was a master of the ceremony of *Dhikrullah*, which he conducted in the tradition of the Halveti-Jerrahi Tarikat every Thursday night. Lasting between one to three hours, the ceremony of Remembrance formulates a microscopic mirror of the reality of existence. The motion of the *Dhikrullah* reflects the revolving of the spheres. In the spiritual dimension the process of centering in Allah and finding Union with Him is described. The ceremony reiterates the stages of Ascent towards being lost in Allah, and the stages of Descent to the plane of manifestation, where one remains subsistent in Allah. Thus the Path to Perfection that the Sufis have vowed to follow is shown in concentrated form in the ceremony of *Dhikrullah*.

from the Foreword

For twenty years, Sheikh Muzaffer Ozak al-Jerrahi was the Sheikh of the Halveti-Jerrahi Order of Dervishes. A prolific author in the Turkish language, Sheikh Muzaffer was well-known for his sage advice, spiritual counseling and his masterly dream interpretations. His deep love for the American people was expressed in his founding of numerous branches of the Halveti-Jerrahi Order in America.

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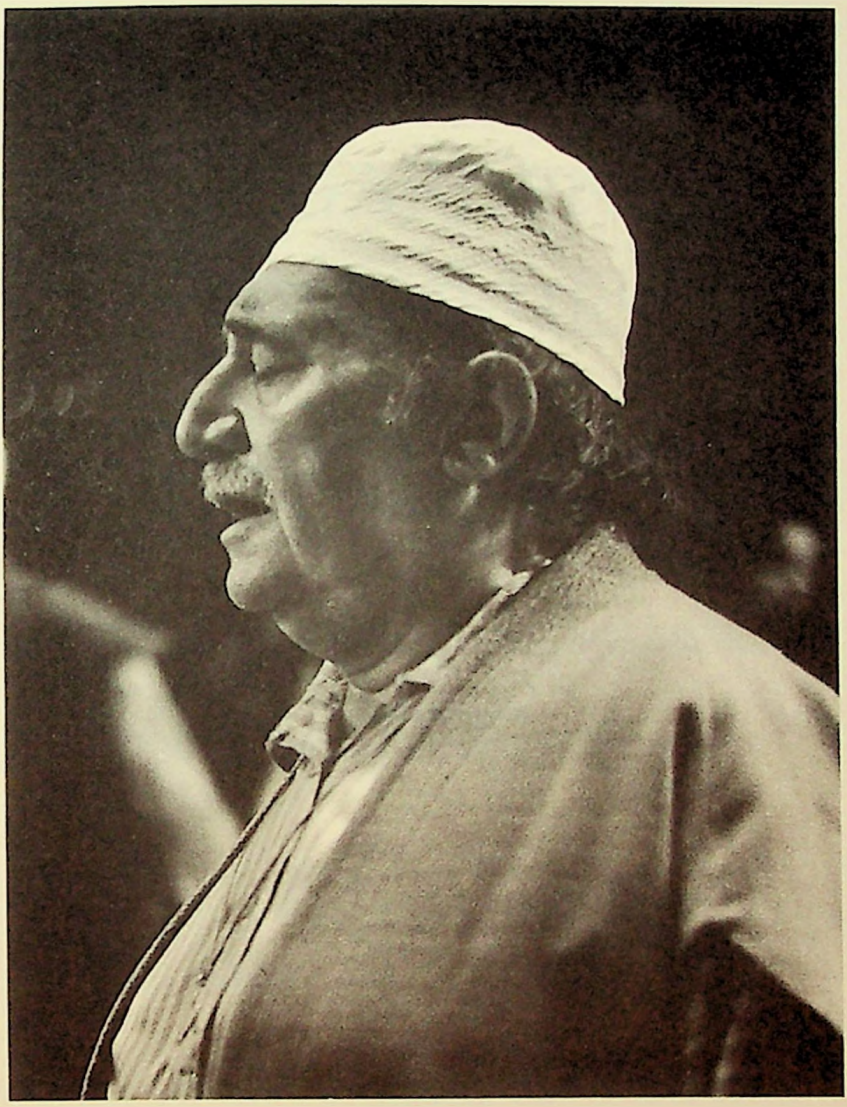

SHEIKH MUZAFFER OZAK

THE GARDEN OF DERVISHES

SHEIKH MUZAFFER OZAK AL-JERRAHI

Grand Sheikh
The Halveti-Jerrahi Order of Dervishes

Translation from the Original Turkish
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Foreword
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ASHKI BOOK

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Louis Rogers

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of the Halveti-Jerrahi Order of Dervishes

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Foreword

Effendi's rumbling voice broke through the murmur that filled the room. "Did I teach you *La ilaha illallah*?" Everyone was startled, and compelled by the urgency of the question, sought for the answer. Voices of "Yes" were heard. Effendi again leant forward and asked "Did I teach you *La ilaha illallah*?" This time the answers came faster, more voices sounded a clearer "Yes." "Did I teach you *La ilaha illallah*?" Effendi asked for a third time, and unanimously everyone answered "Yes." Effendi sank back into his chair, seemingly relieved and fell silent for a while.

About four months later Effendi, known as Sheikh Muzaffer Ozak, joined his Beloved. On February 12, 1985 he passed to the eternal realm. Thousands of dervishes and friends accompanied him to his last resting place in the dergah of the Halveti-Jerrahi Order in Istanbul.

The meaning of the ominous questioning that one late night suddenly became clear. Sheikh Muzaffer had made sure that he had delivered the trust bestowed on him by God, the declaration of God's Oneness, *La ilaha illallah* (There is no god but God). As a spiritual teacher he deposited the most precious treasure in the hearts of the members of his spiritual family.

Since Sheikh Muzaffer has passed and the veil of his physical presence is rent, his charisma and spiritual power are manifesting even more concretely. His Being reveals itself to the hearts of his dervishes and lovers, and through their transmission to all those around them.

Sheikh Muzaffer also transmitted his knowledge in the form of writing. Two of his essays are presented in this book. The first essay "Sofiyye Sohbetleri" (turkish: Sufi Talks) is a mystical catechism. It takes the form of a

"sohbet" (talk held by a Sufi Master), in which Sheikh Muzaffer takes us on the journey to the One God. The 'travellers' (or spiritual seekers) traverse four main waystations: Repentance, Renunciation, followed by Love, and at last Remembrance.

The practice of Remembrance characterizes the mystics of Islam, commonly called Sufis. Practiced alone or in congregation, Remembrance of God (*Dhikrullah*) is to invoke the Names of Allah. The names of God that are always repeated whether in solitary or in congregational *Dhikrullah* are the following: *La ilaha illallah* (There is no god but God), *Allah* (The One God) and *Hu* (The Divine Self or Essence).

Sheikh Muzaffer was a master of the ceremony of *Dhikrullah*, which he conducted in the tradition of the Halveti-Jerrahi Tarikat every Thursday night. Lasting between one to three hours, the ceremony of Remembrance formulates a microscopic mirror of the reality of existence. The motion of the *Dhikrullah* reflects the revolving of the spheres. In the spiritual dimension the process of centering in Allah and finding Union with Him is described. The ceremony reiterates the stages of Ascent towards being lost in Allah (arabic: *fanafillah)* and the stages of Descent to the plane of manifestation, where one remains subsistent in Allah (arabic: *baqabillah*). Thus the Path to Perfection that the Sufis have vowed to follow is shown in concentrated form in the ceremony of *Dhikrullah.*

Allah Most High promises spiritual seekers his closeness through Remembrance. "Remember Me and I shall remember you," Allah reveals in his Holy Quran.

In one of the sacred oral traditions the Prophet Muhammad addresses his followers: "When you come to the gardens of Paradise, taste the fruits." When asked what the gardens of Paradise were, he replied: "The circles of Dhikr."

The mystical fruits can be tasted in the Dhikrullah, the least of its fruits being ecstasy (arabic: *wajd*). The practice of Dhikrullah makes the dervish conscious of his inherent Remembrance, and eventually of the Remembrance of every created being in the universe. It is revealed in the Holy Quran that all creatures including inanimate things like plants and stones are continuously remembering their Creator in their own fashion. Sheikh Muzaffer always reminded his dervishes that their every breath was uttering the name of Essence *Hu* in exhalation. In that manner, existence is a constant praise of the Divine.

Remembrance provides a means for the dervishes to express their longing for Allah, the Beloved. True dervishes neither look for spiritual rewards nor desire Paradise, but yearn to behold the Countenance of Allah (arabic: *wajhullah*). "The Saints are the light of Allah's Countenance" writes Sheikh Muzaffer. The dervishes that reach perfection and therefore are Saints ('Friends of Allah' in Muslim terminology) become the light of Allah's Countenance, which they longed to behold.

The process of Perfection is determined through this longing for the Beloved, which finds expression in Love. To take Love as a guide is the fastest way to attain Union with the Beloved, Sheikh Muzaffer taught. He dedicated one of his books, *The Unveiling of Love,* and many sohbets to the theme of Love, describing a way of attaining to Love for the Divine Essence through metaphorical love. Sheikh Muzaffer called any love for other than God metaphorical love. He taught that hidden within all forms of love is Love for Allah, culminating in the realization that Allah is Love.

"I was a hidden Treasure and loved to be known, therefore I created creation" was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by Allah (Hadith Qudsi). Allah Most High created creation out of love and in the desire to be known. Only human beings are able to consciously endeavor to know God, and therefore

humankind is the crown of creation according to Muslim tradition.

Humankind is crystallized in the Person of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), who is the prototype of the human being, also called Insan Kamil, the Perfect Man. According to oral tradition (Hadith), Allah Most High first created the light of Muhammad, and then evolved the whole of humankind from that light. "If not for you, I would not have created creation," Allah addresses his beloved Prophet in Hadith Qudsi, and thus the secret of creation unfolds as a love story between Allah and His messenger Muhammad, who essentially is perfect humanity.

"La ilaha illallah Muhammadan rasulullah," the Muslim attestation of faith means 'There is no god but the One God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God.' The affirmation of the Existence of one Supreme Being is completed by the appointment of the beloved Muhammad as the messenger of Truth. This twofold affirmation carries the secret of manifestation of Being from Non-Being and describes the Self-Revelation of the Divine through humanity. Spiritual masters are the inheritors of "Muhammadan rasulullah," and thus Sheikh Muzaffer was constantly teaching through words and through his own spiritual state the message of *La ilaha illallah. La ilaha illallah* is a trust bestowed by Allah upon his Friends (turkish: *evliyaullah*), who have come to realize the Oneness of God.

The "Friends of God" are the topic of the second essay in this book. Here Sheikh Muzaffer acquaints us with several *evliyaullah* who have passed away, but are alive as spiritually empowered souls. He acquaints us with the "adab," or spiritual etiquette of visiting their sacred tombs and discusses the charisma of these holy beings. According to Sufi teachings, the "Friends of Allah" become more powerful once the sword of their soul has left the sheath of the body, since they have found intimacy with their Beloved, Allah All-Powerful.

Spiritual seekers request help, both material and spiritual of such noble souls in visiting their resting-places. Sheikh Muzaffer talks about his own frequent visits to the tomb of Telli Baba. Not much is known about Telli Baba's origin (Father Silverthread) or his life, but the spiritual power emanating from his resting-place is a fact known to Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Sheikh Muzaffer, without offspring after 30 years of marriage, addressed himself to Telli Baba with the special request for a child. In turn he promised Telli Baba devotional acts in the form of repetitions of *La ilaha illallah* and recitations of the Quran. Soon after, his first child, a beautiful girl was born, to be followed by a son four years later, also upon petitioning Telli Baba. Sheikh Muzaffer makes it clear that Saints like Telli Baba act as mediators, and since their souls dwell at the Source, petitions are bound to be answered.

On my own visits to Turkey I visited several sacred tombs including Telli Baba's. I approached the custom with mixed feelings of awe and disbelief, but once I entered the sacred spaces I was freed from all preconceptions. I was meeting a special person with each visit: often overwhelmed by awe, as this noble soul reflected Allah's majesty (*jalal*), sometimes overwhelmed with intense ecstasy by Allah's beauty (*jamal*), which radiated from that soul.

I was also fortunate to visit the sacred tombs of Pir Nureddin Jerrahi and Sheikh Muzaffer, who rests next to his own master Sheikh Fahreddin, and close to all the other Sheikhs that form the spiritual chain of the Halveti-Jerrahi Tarikat. This spiritual chain (arabic: *silsila*) starts with Pir Nureddin Jerrahi, born at the end of the 17th century, founder of the Jerrahi branch of the wide-spread Halveti (arabic: *Khalwati*) Tarikat, founded in the 15th century. The Jerrahi dergah is located in an old quarter of Istanbul called Kara Gumruk. The sacred tombs are in a special room of the dergah that is always illuminated by candlelight.

Hazreti Pir Nureddin is known for getting petitions and supplications answered, and thus his tomb is very frequented. Many Westerners visit the dergah, now under the guidance of Sheikh Sefer Dal, and follow the regular activities, particularly the ceremony of Dhikrullah on Thursday nights.

There are several branches of the Jerrahi Order in the United States. One branch thrives in the heart of New York City, led by Sheikh Nur al-Jerrahi, "Khalifa" (Representative) of Sheikh Muzaffer, who continues the tradition of Dhikrullah and transmits the teaching of the Tarikat. Another big branch is evolving in Mexico City, led by a young woman, Murida Amina Teslima. Sheikh Muzaffer's legacy is thus revealing itself in the form of his dervishes, in whom the seed of the trees of gnosis (arabic: *marifat*) that he planted are growing steadily by Allah's permission.

O Allah, do not deprive us of Your Wine of Love,
Greetings of Peace to Your sublime beloved,
The Prophet Muhammad, to his family and companions.
Greetings of Peace to the Cupbearer of lovers,
Pir Nureddin Jerrahi and to your lover Sheikh Muzaffer Ashki.

Sixtina Friedrich
The Masjid al-Farah
New York City

INTRODUCTION

It is a fact of history now that we in the western world have been confronted in recent years by an explosion of spirituality. In every great religious tradition there has begun this same subtle unfolding of its more esoteric nature, perhaps because people are now more willing to accept the inward, mystical transcendence of religious experience, perhaps because the world is profoundly in need of spiritual guidance and direction.

Any sympathetic reading of religious history teaches us that the intense longing for genuine mystical experience eventually turns the attention of sincere spiritual seekers within as they seek an inner path towards the Divine. As Westerners have striven to satisfy that need by searching among the world's great paths for spiritual sustenance, Buddhist and Hindu traditions have been received enthusiastically in the essentially Judeo-Christian world more familiar to western minds. And in this historic process, so too esoteric Islam has made its own particular inroad into western consciousness.

As in other great spiritual traditions, Islam has within it its own great mystical testament, the Sufi Path. No one familiar with Sufism can fail to note its richness and complexity, nor can one miss the sublime variety of expression of its practitioners. Sufism can show one face in one moment and in the next, reveal itself in quite another aspect.

The Garden Of Dervishes is one of those rare books which unite two extremes of spirituality, devotional love and esoteric scholarship, through both the person and the teachings of its author, Sheikh Muzaffer Ozak. Even a cursory glance through its contents reveals the Sheikh's knowledge of complex spiritual customs and practices, traditions and beliefs, as well as his detailed explications of various stations of the soul.

One may read the poetry of Rumi, for example, or any other of the extraordinary Sufi poets, and be overcome by their insight and eloquence, and the wisdom of their devotion. As in all truly great works of hagiographic art or expressions of deep and profound spirituality, the poems (or teachings) are so often the manifestation of nothing else but pure love, the transforming love of the lover for the Divine Beloved.

And then again, one can read in Ibn Arabi the more completely articulated higher teachings, highly complex descriptions of subtle states of consciousness and stations of the soul. One is introduced to a universe of subtle and sublime teachings, a new way of seeing creation itself.

If one responds according to the deepest yearning of one's heart, nothing less than a profound commitment to years of study and training may occur, resulting in a deep and total absorption of profound spiritual teachings of enormous depth. If one is fortunate, a teacher may appear capable of revealing this hidden universe to the sincere aspirant Or, possibly, in a flash of recognition, one may undergo the deepest surrender, and in those depths, find the soul of the universe hidden within one's own heart.

Sheikh Muzaffer was one of the best of classic commentators and contemporary teachers. His life and teachings ranged through the fullest expression of Sufi traditions. His books testify to his extraordinary breadth and depth of knowledge, while his dervishes and friends will testify to his enormous capacity to reflect the Divine love and acceptance he had found for and within himself.

One might pause here and reflect a moment on the metaphorical nature of the title itself, *The Garden of Dervishes,* for in Sufism, nothing is wasted, everything has a meaning and a Divine direction. Any number of analogies immediately come to mind, all with great value, for Sufism operates on many levels. The Sheikh might be the gardener, or rather, the representative of

the Divine Power that sustains the universe and all being. The garden might be this world and the dervishes all those who set foot on the spiritual path with longing and desire. One readily welcomes the intense spiritual insights that seem to come quickly as one plunges into Sheikh Muzaffer's world of spiritual illumination.

For the dervishes of the Halveti-Jerrahi Order (or for that matter, anyone interested in spiritual growth), the teachings in this book provide just those insights. What else does a spiritual teaching offer but an atmosphere of guidance and direction, and the answers to unspoken prayers and unasked questions? One's needs are sometimes met according to one's ability to perceive the manner in which help is offered. To those who claim God does not answer prayers, one can only suggest that they have been looking for their answers in the wrong places.

The Garden of Dervishes is one such answer. Sheikh Muzaffer reveals the richness and power of the Halveti-Jerrahi tradition in a manner consistent with life in our own day and age, while at the same time remaining true to its historic roots. Not for him a dry insistence on ancient customs, or a too literal-minded reading of Hadith or commentary. For those who knew Sheikh Muzaffer, Sufism was a living expression of truth, whose "proofs" were not to be found in dusty pages, but in the loving hearts of its practitioners.

Above all else, the Sufism that Sheikh Muzaffer taught and practiced was and always will remain the Path of Love. Whatever the difficulty of understanding the varieties of specific descriptions or injunctions, we are assured again and again, directly and in the most subtle of ways, that the ultimate goal of all these teachings is simply the complete fulfillment and realization of Divine Love. What more could one want?

Louis Rogers
Pir Publications

PART ONE

THE GARDEN OF DERVISHES

Exoteric knowledge is necessary. It is a prerequisite for those who would acquire esoteric knowledge. Just as there is a road to be traveled from metaphorical love to real love, there is also a road that leads from exoteric knowledge to esoteric knowledge. The roads to God are as many as the different breaths we creatures breathe. Any aspect of exoteric knowledge can be the starting point for esoteric knowledge. If something has an exterior, it also possesses an interior. Only a fool would accept the one and not the other.

Divine Creation

Man as Macrocosm

As created beings brought into this transitory world, each of us has a duty: to find out where we came from, why we came, where we are going, who brought us here, and who will take us away again. Having discovered the One who brought us into this world, we must know and understand the extent of His might and power. Then it becomes the first and foremost obligation of every creature to obey Him and love Him as He deserves.

As intelligent beings, we are bound to acknowledge that He, Allah, possesses the might and power to bring us into this world, and to remove us from it, without our prior consent, in the manner described in this Verse of the Noble Quran:

O mankind, if you are in doubt about the Resurrection, surely We created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a blood clot, then from a little lump of flesh, formed yet unformed, in order to show you clearly. And We keep in the wombs whatever We will, until an appointed term, and We deliver you as infants, then let you reach maturity. Some of you die, and some are reduced to the most abject senility, so that they know nothing after having had some knowledge.

And you see the earth barren, but when We send water down upon it, it quivers and swells and shoots up plants of every splendid kind. (22:5)

The manner in which human beings are created is a great marvel of wisdom, majesty and power, and to deny this would be a sign of tragic ignorance.

Mankind was created neither in vain nor by chance:
Does man suppose he will be left in futility? (75:36)

On careful reflection, it is clear that the creation of a human being is no different, for Allah the All-Glorious, from the creation of this whole vast universe. The material and spiritual properties of mankind are inherent in the entire creation. Indeed, man is the "macrocosm" or greater world, while the universe is the "microcosm" or lesser world. The Masters of Truth and Reality teach us that man, though outwardly small, is inwardly great, whereas the universe, created outwardly great, is inwardly inferior to man.

All that exists, be it this lower world and what it contains, or the Hereafter with its Paradise, Hell, Bridge and Balance*, everything that can be seen or known has been created and brought into being for the sake of mankind. As for man, he has been created for the sake of the Divine Truth. To deny God is therefore to deny oneself.

When a work of art exists, the author of that work must surely exist. Even if we cannot see the artist in person, we can see him in his work. When we witness his artistic expression, we believe that he himself exists. To behold a painting is to know the painter; to behold a sculpture is to know the sculptor.

If we recognize the splendor of our own being with all its strength and power, we should bow down before the One who endowed us with that strength and power. We cannot doubt His Existence and Oneness:

Your God is One God,
there is no god but He,
the All-Merciful, the Compassionate. (2:163)

Human Destiny

Man is not the author of his own fate. Human destiny is decreed and predetermined by none but our Divine Creator. If it were otherwise, our birth, death, and selection of parents would be of our own choosing. Man has indeed been given a will of his own, but he is free to exercise it only within the limits of a particular framework. Destiny is in the Hand of God, meaning that it is a universal will.

The following analogy may serve to illustrate the distinction between the particular will-power conferred on human beings, on the one hand, and the universal will on the other.

Imagine a set of passengers on a bus, train or steamer; see how they move about to this side or that, to the front or the back, sitting down or leaving their seats, eating and drinking. These actions are examples of the exercising of our particular freedom of will. Meanwhile, however, the vehicle or vessel is proceeding along its route or course, controlled by the driver or captain. Here we have a simile for the universal will. The passengers' movements have no effect on the direction and speed of the train or boat; likewise human destiny cannot be influenced by the measure of free will that has been granted to human beings. Odd cases may seem like exceptions, but such instances are themselves divinely determined. There is nothing beyond the scope of destiny.

Man is entirely circumscribed, inwardly and outwardly, by the will of the Divine Truth, just as he is surrounded in the material sense by the atmosphere. As witness the facts that our life is confined within a limited compass, bounded by obstacles visible or invisible, known or unknowable, that we are incapable of achieving our every wish and desire, that we cannot attain all our goals, that life and death are beyond our control.

We are governed by a force that keeps us wholly at its own behest. The existence of that force is undeniable, and clearly proves the Existence, the Power and the Might of Allah, Exalted is He.

We are allowed to wish, but the power to create and bring into being has not been granted to us. Wishing is particular will; creation and bringing-into-being are peculiar to universal will. The desire or wish comes from us, but creation and bringing-into-being are from Allah. If it pleases Him, He creates what we wish for and causes it to exist; if not, He does not grant our wish. What we seem to cause, we really "acquire" through His causation. But even this "acquisition," desire and wish originate from Him.

Where did this human being come from?
Surely from Allah through His Power and Might.

Where is he going?
Back to Allah and again through His Might and Power.

In this coming and going, what part can man's own wishes play?
Allah says "come," and His servant enters this world. Allah gives the order, "divest yourself of your body." The servant obeys at once. At the Divine Command, he returns to the Truth, to the Other World. The wish, the will, the commands, all are from the Lord; He does not ask the servant, He consults no one. He wields His Power in absolute independence. The servant is subject, God is Sovereign. The All-Glorious One is Witnessed through His Works, Comprehensive through His Power, Known through all His Names. There is no god but He, and He Alone is Worthy of worship.

Mankind is the work of His mighty Power, and from mankind He chose His Beloved, to be the mirror of His Essence. From His own Light He lovingly created the light of humanity, to which He gave the name

Muhammad. By affirming the apostolic and prophetic mission of this Beloved, second only to the Essence of Divinity, He made manifest His glorious attribute of "True Believer" (*Al-Mu'min).*

From this light sublime He then created the Mighty Throne*, the Splendid Pedestal*, the Ultimate Lotus Tree* and the Prosperous House*, as well as the sun and the moon; He created Paradise as a promise to those who believe in Him and in His Beloved, and Hell-Fire as a threat to the unbelievers. The jinn He created from fire, and the angels from light.

He created Adam from earth and water; making him bearer of the light of Ahmad*. He proclaimed him to the universe as God's vicegerent, taught him the Divine Names, and made him the mirror of His Essence. While Adam came to know the Names by virtue of the light he bore, God made His Beloved intimate with His Names, His Attributes and His Essence, for He made him Chief of the Prophets, Favorite of the Lord, and a Mercy to All the Worlds.

The Lord created us, His servants, in His Beloved's honor. It is our duty to acknowledge God's Most Holy Essence, to affirm His Unity and to worship Him. We have been created for that very purpose, as the Holy Quran declares:

I did not create jinn and mankind
except to worship Me. (51:56)

Faith, Worship and Morality

Worship without faith has no value, whereas faith without worship is not altogether valueless. But such faith is like a candle burning in the open air, with no lantern for protection. Worship serves as a lantern for the candle of the light of faith, and that lantern is reinforced by moral virtues, as if by a net of wire. In other words, a true human being must possess these three attributes:

Belief in, and obedience to Allah.
Worship, performed in all sincerity.
Good moral character.

If their worship is to be accepted by Allah, believers must cultivate the moral virtues prescribed by the Quran and exemplified by our Master, the Most Noble Prophet Muhammad. Otherwise, their ritual prayers yield nothing but weariness, and from fasting they derive only hunger. Sincerity is a prerequisite for worship, and sincerity constitutes the greater part of moral virtue.

Many immoral characters, including some who observed religious worship, have been known to lose their faith at the moment of death. By contrast, many unbelievers have been graced with a truly Islamic character, unbeknownst to themselves. Through this grace, and by their service to humanity, they have won the favor of Allah, achieved faith at the end of their lives, and so gained entry to Paradise with the help of the Lord.

For true and virtuous believers, who perform their worship and do good works, there is a promise of bliss in the Hereafter.

Surely on Allah's friends there is no fear,
Nor do they grieve. (110:62)

There are two kinds of faith. One kind of faith is picked up second-hand, by imitation. The other kind is acquired directly, by personal conviction. Unless you cast off imitation, you will never reach conviction. Read the book of your own being here and now.

Do not wait for the dreadful Day of Resurrection, but call yourself to account before you must reckon with the All-Glorious One. Admission to Paradise must be earned here, for this world is the seed-bed of the Hereafter. As you sow, so shall you reap. In that world none shall be wronged; each shall receive what he or she deserves. Gird yourself now with high resolve.

Be a servant to Allah, ever mindful that you are merely a mortal creature. Be worthy of the honor of serving Him, the Everlasting One. Self-servitude will only drag you down, but servitude to Allah will bring you forgiveness, and will make you sovereign of both worlds.

Are you one of those who say: "My mother and father believe in God; I go along with them, so I believe too?" Forsake this faith-by-imitation and find your own conviction. Refresh your faith by affirming the Divine Unity. Behold the works of Allah, the Lord of Majesty.

How does He revive the lifeless earth? You and I shall likewise be restored to life after death, along with all creatures. He is the One who brings death and brings to life. See how He is Able to create and bring from non-existence into being, then to return to non-existence what He has created and brought into being. Open your eyes to this, so that your second-hand faith may be replaced by true conviction.

REPENTANCE

If you have come to understand the meaning of your life, if you seek the approval of the Truth and the honor of communion with the Divine Presence, then you must set out upon the Path of Love. On this road the starting-point is Allah and the ultimate destination is likewise Allah.

The guide to this radiant way is none other than the Lord's Beloved, the Intercessor on Judgment Day, the Leader of Lovers, the Prince of the Saints, the Chief of the Prophets, the venerable Muhammad Mustafa, may Allah bless him and salute him with peace. As the intimate friends of Allah, the Saints* are his deputies.

This radiant path, this Way of Guidance begins with faith and surrender. This bountiful grace is obtained by renouncing the vanities of this world for the sake of the Hereafter, by seeking Allah's pleasure and by yearning for His Favor.

Seekers who would travel this path must first pass through the Gate of Repentance. To seek Allah by worship without repentance, is like taking medicine without following a prescription. He therefore instructs us:

Those who repent, who worship, who give praise, who travel, who bow and prostrate themselves, who enjoin what is right and proper and forbid what is wrong and improper, who keep all the limits set by Allah (blessed are they); so give good tidings to the believers! (9:112)

Repentance has four stages:

1) TAWBA: Repentance (in word and deed)
For those at the level of the Domineering Self (*al-nafs al-ammāra*). This applies generally, as the Glorious Quran tells us:

Repent to Allah together, all you believers, that you may prosper! (24:31)

Moreover, the blessed Prophet said: "To repent a sin is tantamount to never having committed it."

This first stage of repentance is for all believers. For those who renounce this world in favor of the Hereafter, wishing to make repentance for their sins, to forsake their disobedience and to become worthy servants of Allah, repentance must be accomplished in the following manner:

First, it is necessary to believe in Allah and His Messenger, to carry out His commandments with a feeling of love, and to flee in fear from all things forbidden by His Majesty.

Next, the penitent is required to forsake forever all sins previously committed by him, wittingly or unwittingly, and to discharge all outstanding religious obligations (prayers unperformed, fasts unobserved, alms unpaid, or pilgrimage not made).

Furthermore, he must restore whatever he may have taken to its rightful place, apologize for any hurt he has caused, make restitution for any wrong done to any human being whether Muslim or non-Muslim, and thus seek pardon for any infraction of the rights of the Muslims in particular, or of human rights in general.

This repentance will not be complete unless it is accompanied by remorse for all past misdeeds, and by a firm determination never to repeat those mistakes.

Truly Allah loves those who turn to Him repentant,
And He loves those who keep themselves in purity.
(2:22)

2) INĀBA : Turning (to the Lord)
This is appropriate for those at the level of the Censorious Self (*al-nafs al-lawwāma*) and is so named because of the expression used in the Quranic Verse:

Turn to your Lord in repentance,
And submit yourselves to Him,
Before punishment comes upon you;
Then you will not be helped. (39:54)

This repentance is proper to those who aspire to join the company of the "elite" among the believers, and who have moved one stage forward along the spiritual path by reforming the Domineering Self. To reach this stage, penitents must renounce this world, be content with little, enhance their moral character, cleanse and purify their lower nature, and eschew all activities displeasing to Allah. To make themselves acceptable to the Truth, they must wage an unrelenting internal struggle against their worldly desires and inclinations, working for inner purity by constant criticism of their own sinfulness.

External purity is attainable through the Sacred Law, internal purity through tears. If we succeed in purifying ourselves by this kind of repentance, we experience a manifestation of the Almighty's everlasting love. Our love for Him results from His eternal love for us.

Someone asked the saintly Rābi°a al-°Adawīya:* "If I repent the many sins I have committed, will my repentance be accepted, I wonder?" The venerable Rabi°a replied: "No, you could not even repent unless He relented toward you." This was her way of saying that sin and disobedience are human characteristics, while to accept repentance is an attribute of Allah, the Ever-Relenting.

The repentance called "Turning (to the Lord)" has its station in the heart, of which it is an attribute:

Those who fear the All-Merciful in secret,
And come with a penitently turning heart. (50:33)

3) AWBA: Returning (to the Lord)
This is appropriate for those at the level of the Inspiring Self (*al-nafs al-mulhima.*) This form of repentance is so called on the basis of the Quranic Verse:

An excellent servant indeed, for he was ever returning! (38:44)

This stage of repentance is proper to the elite among the saints. It arises from their ardent longing to meet the Exalted Lord.

The simple penitent is one who is moved by fear of divine wrath and punishment; feeling remorse, he repents his sins and faults. "Turning" in this case is repentance motivated by desire for merit and reward. "Returning" is repentance inspired by yearning to meet Allah, to experience divine communion. This third degree of repentance has its station in the soul.

As the Holy Quran indicates, this station is the Station of Servanthood:

Enter among My servants... (89:29)

At the third level of repentance, penitents exhibit the following states and characteristics. They avoid the company of mortals, preferring total solitude. All their attention is devoted to Allah, and in His company they keep vigil. As lovers yearning for divine communion, they detach themselves from all worldly and unworldly desires and inclinations, seeking nothing but divine approval. They fight the Greater Holy War, they struggle with their lower selves.

4) RUJŪ° : Reverting (to the Lord)
This degree of repentance is proper to those blessed

beings who have attained the level of the Tranquil Self (*al-nafs al-mu̱ṭma'inna*).

O tranquil soul, revert to your Lord... (89:27-28)

This is the level of the Prophets and the greatest saints. There is no higher level of repentance. The Divine summons, *"Revert to your Lord!"* is addressed to the Prophetic Messengers and to those special intimates of Allah, the elite of the elite. Through the gracious favor of this Divine invitation, the noble soul is stripped of egoism, of separate personality, as it is absorbed into the nature of the Lord. Such individuals ascribe no act of worship to themselves, nor do they claim the authorship of any good deed; they never say, "I did it," but always, "God did it." And their words are literally true.

Whatever good befalls you is from Allah. (4:79)

If anything bad should issue from them, their sense of propriety causes them to take the responslbility upon themselves:

... and whatever evil befalls you is from yourself. (4:79)

They said: 'Lord, we have wronged ourselves.' (7:23)

Attracted by the force of Divine grace, souls like these are filled with longing to meet Allah. They act from no motive but to win His Good Pleasure. They always behold the Truth; they are ever with the Truth. Having reached this stage, they are left with no desire but for self-annihilation in the Truth, through meeting the All-Merciful and witnessing His Beauty, for the abolition of duality, and for the sweet taste of the wine of Unity.

The Martyrdom Of Saint Manṣūr Al-Ḥallāj*

When the venerable Saint Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj was brought to be hanged at the place of execution, they first cut off his right hand. Ḥallāj smiled. Then they

cut off his left hand, at which he laughed out loud. He behaved like this because he was filled with joy and happiness over his imminent meeting with the Divine Truth. His only concern was that his face might pale from the loss of blood, and that onlookers might misinterpret this paleness.

He therefore cried out: "My face is not pale from fear, only from loss of blood. In fact, I am delighted to be meeting the Truth, rejoicing at being united with Him. My joy and happiness increase, as I draw closer to my Lord. That is why I smiled when they cut off my right hand, then gave a happy laugh when the sight of my left hand told me I had moved a little nearer to my Lord. I did that to preserve the merit of my martyrdom."

As he uttered this cry, he was becoming the Prince of Lovers. Yes indeed, the venerable Manşūr had become the chief of those who find annihilation in the Truth.

It must be clearly understood that repentance is required of us all, regardless of spiritual attainment. In the sight of God, however, not every penitent is at the same level. We may use the same word "repentance," but in meaning and content the repentance of the elite is poles apart from the repentance of the average person.

As in the example set by the venerable Manşūr, many lovers of the Truth, when suffering execution for His sake, have reddened their faces with their own blood lest their paleness be wrongly understood.

Yunus Emre, * the great thirteenth century mystic poet declared:

Heedless one, from sleep awake!
Come to repentance; come, repent.
To God's court yourself betake;
Come to repentance, come, repent.

Near is the appointed time;
Life is now long past its prime.
You, who think this world sublime,
Come to repentance, come, repent.

You, who think this world your own,
Come to repentance; come, repent.
Before the bird of life has flown,
Come to repentance, come, repent.

Look at your beard; see your hair!
Once it was black, now grey shows there.
For you this world has set a snare.
Come to repentance, come, repent.

When the Resurrection breaks,
Mountains lying flat as lakes,
Oh so many our mistakes!
Come to repentance, come, repent.

Ere the soul away must fly,
And the body lifeless lie,
Yunus Emre, heed the cry:
Come to repentance, come, repent.

The Degrees of Knowledge

Exoteric knowledge is necessary. It is a prerequisite for those who would acquire esoteric knowledge. Just as there is a road to be traveled from metaphorical love to real love, there is also a road that leads from exoteric knowledge to esoteric knowledge. The roads to God are as many as the different breaths we creatures breathe. Any aspect of exoteric knowledge can be the starting point for esoteric knowledge. If something has an exterior, it also possesses an interior. Only a fool would accept the one and not the other.

The exterior of the universe is visible to us, but that exterior hides an interior. Likewise, whatever has a beginning also has an end, and whatever has an end has a beginning. God is the First, the Last, the Outer, the Inner. He Is the Creator of all things, and He knows their true nature. He is Allah, the All-Glorious.

Exoteric knowledge is the subject of sciences like logic, semantics, sociology, history, geography, mathematics and chemistry. One becomes learned in these sciences by a process of reading and study. To acquire esoteric knowledge, however, you must work with sincere devotion, practice constant remembrance of Allah, eat, talk and sleep but little, avoid unnecessary social contacts, and be completely receptive to a spiritual guide who is competent to direct you on the path of Truth. There is no other access to esoteric knowledge.

Three things are indispensable to the acquisition of esoteric knowledge, the knowledge of reality: Renunciation of this World; Renunciation of the Next World; Renunciation of Existence (there is also a fourth, namely Renunciation of Renunciation).

The Degrees of Renunciation

"Renunciation of This World" does not mean total rejection of all the bounties it has to offer. It means detaching one's feelings and appetites from those bounties. Our love and desire should be directed exclusively toward Allah, Exalted is He. He is the True Beloved. We must be aware of this fact, and savor the delight of this awareness.

"Renunciation of the Next World" means worshiping and obeying Allah because He is Allah, rather than because we are keen to enjoy the sensual pleasures of Paradise and fear the flames of Hell. Worship and obedience ought to be inspired by the desire to know Allah, to love Him, to win His approval, to behold His Beauty and to be united with Him. Our only fear should be that expressed in the words: "What if Allah should not admit me into His service!"

"Renunciation of Existence" means giving up one's being to discover perpetuity with the Truth, crying: "My God, You are my aim and my goal; I wish for nothing but Your good pleasure."

"Renunciation of Renunciation" is a state that becomes manifest in those who have mastered the first three types of renunciation. This state cannot be written about.

How can we renounce this world and the Hereafter, how can we achieve self-annihilation in the Truth, if we do not acquire sincerity, if we do not submit ourselves to the guide, if we do not struggle with our lower nature, if we do not practice constant remembrance, if we eat, sleep and talk excessively, if we do not withdraw into solitude, if we do not commune with the Truth?

The Importance of Dreams

When we encounter a problem in matters of religious belief and practice, we can seek a solution in the relevant literature, or by consulting an authority. In the case of esoteric knowledge, solutions to problems must be sought by having recourse to the spiritual guide, who must also be consulted in more serious matters if dangerous pitfalls are to be avoided.

On the path, all difficulties are resolved by way of the heart, through the blessedness of the Divine Names. It is essential for the aspirant to report his dream-experiences promptly to his spiritual guide, who will then give the necessary explanations and resolve any problems.

On the Path of Love, great importance is attached to dreams and visions. Indeed, a revelatory dream is said to constitute one fortieth of prophetic inspiration. Visions seen by an aspirant do not rank with prophetic inspiration, but they are at very least "good tidings."

It was through a revelatory vision that our blessed Master, the King of Prophets, first became aware of the mission to which he had been divinely appointed. It is not surprising, therefore, that the noble Mystical Path should value dreams and visions so highly.

What is a dream, after all? There is neither eye to see, nor material substance to be seen. What does the seeing? What is seen?

An aspirant's dream enables his guide to determine what progress he has made. By virtue of the litanies and remembrances a disciple recites, and through the grace of the Tarīqa*, his spiritual station is shown to him in dreams that reveal his hidden character. For example, the disciple may have all the outward appearance of a human being, but if his actions have

been unacceptable to the Truth, this will affect his inner quality.

If he is dominated by his animal instincts, he will dream about the particular beast whose characteristics he shares. On the basis of this dream, his guide will make appropriate adjustment in his instruction, and he will be given different Divine Names to invoke and litanies to recite.

Dreams are actually interpreted by means of the specific inspiration the guide receives from the Truth. All depends upon the power and strength divinely conferred upon the guide, and on the aptitude of the particular disciple. The same remarks apply not only to dreams, but also to waking visions in which, through the spiritual influence of the Saints, a disciple may see his inner nature revealed.

Many people are human beings outwardly, but animals within:

Many are the jinn and men We have made for Hell: They have hearts with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see, and ears with which they do not hear. They are like cattle - no, even more misguided. (7:179)

A Dervish Meets A Donkey In His Dreams

A great Sheikh once had among his followers a dervish who prided himself on his piety. The Sheikh instructed this pious dervish to observe a period of solitary retreat. Secluded in his cell, the disciple applied himself diligently to remembrance and contemplation - until a donkey appeared and upset his concentration!

"Reverend Sheikh," he complained to his guide, "a donkey attacked me in my cell. It bothered me so much that I was too disturbed to carry on with my

remembrance and meditation. "Go back to your cell," said the venerable Sheikh. "If that donkey comes and interferes with you again, grab it by the ears and call for me!"

The pious dervish complied. No sooner had he returned to his cell and resumed his devotions than the donkey popped up once again. This time the disciple grabbed the animal by its ears and called out to the Sheikh.

The Master was not far away, for he was expecting the call. He threw open the door of the cell, where he found the pious dervish holding tight to his own ears. At the sight of his teacher, the fellow came to his senses. Seeing the true state of affairs, he realized that the "donkey's ears" he had grabbed were none but his own.

He fell at the feet of his Sheikh, weeping and humbling himself as he pleaded for clarification. The venerable Sheikh then interpreted the occurrence by saying: "The donkey that appeared to attack you, preventing you from doing your remembrance and meditation, was the animal form of your own inner nature. It appears that you are still not inwardly human."

According to their respective faults and weaknesses, people behave like various animals. For example, a sensual person, dominated and controlled by carnal desires, will behave like a donkey; a cruel tyrant, like a serpent; a person with a spiteful tongue, like a scorpion; a trickster, like a fox; someone who lives off ill-gotten gains, like a rat or a pig; one who abets the oppressor and crushes the weak, like a dog; the viciously ungrateful, like a cat; a person who mocks at others, like a monkey; a show-off, like a hen; a destructive type, like a leopard, a tiger or a bear.

Training such animals to perform in the circus is a far easier task than taming the human beings who resemble them in character. Wickedness and corruption are characteristics of man rather than of animals. But let us not forget that to be inwardly human is to be superior to the angels themselves.

Outer Cleanliness and Inner Purity

Inner purity is exceedingly hard to achieve, however easy it is to be clean on the surface. We can soon remove a spot of dirt with a little soap and water, but the cleansing of one's inner being is not so simple. A man or woman can freshen up and be neatly dressed within half an hour; that's all the time one needs to acquire the appearance of a normal human being.

It takes much longer to purify the inner self, and to bring it into a truly human condition. We must recognize that for this we need guidance. We need someone to teach us how to become human. Therefore, a teacher, an instructor, a spiritual guide is absolutely essential to this purpose. Above all else, however, the first prerequisite is an aptitude or capacity for becoming a human being.

The Sheikh, The Disciple And The Drunken Drummer

A certain Yemeni Sheikh, a saintly spiritual guide, was walking along with a disciple at his side. As they passed through a field, the Sheikh ordered his disciple to gather eighty stalks and tie them in a bundle. When this had been done, the disciple shouldered his bundle and they continued on their way. Much further down the road, they came upon a group of people who were dancing and making music. The Sheikh pointed out a drunken drummer among the musicians.

"Go and tell that drummer the Sheikh is calling him," he instructed the disciple, who promptly went to convey the message. "Very good, sir," said the drummer, as he followed the disciple back to the Sheikh. "Come with us," said the venerable Sheikh, and the three of them left together.

Before they had gone very far, the saintly guide told the drummer to lie on the ground and take off his shoes. The drummer did as he was told. Then the Sheikh took the bundle of eighty stalks, and used it to beat the drummer on the naked soles of his feet. In so doing, he was inflicting the penalty for drunkenness, as prescribed by Islamic law.

After this, they walked on again together, gradually approaching the coast. When they reached the seashore, the Sheikh immediately cast his sheepskin rug upon the water, calling the others to join him on the floating rug. The drummer did not hesitate, but the disciple stayed on the beach, reluctant to embark.

As the Sheikh and the drummer put out to sea, the old disciple cried: "Master, how can this be? Is such an action worthy of you? Is this considerate behavior? You are sharing your sheepskin rug, your spiritual throne, with a man you have just punished for drinking. His drunkenness has not worn off, yet there you are sailing off together! And here am I, your humble servant for twenty years, left high and dry!"

The venerable Sheikh replied: "Unless a man possesses the inherent capacity for becoming a human being, not even forty years of service will earn him admission to the Divine Presence. This drummer had one failing; he drank alcohol. Now I have subjected him to the beating required by the Sacred Law, we may trust that Allah has pardoned his sin, and that I have reformed him by correcting his one failing. He has become inwardly as well as outwardly human.

If you wish for evidence and proof, contrast his behavior with your own: Unlike you, he did not hesitate to join me aboard my rug, but followed me and surrendered himself trustingly to the Divine Truth. Do not blame me, my son. You have only yourself to blame.

I tried to correct your hypocritical character, but your vanity came to the fore. Hypocritical show is the attribute of the fowl, while vanity is typified by the peacock. I tried to correct your arrogance, but your angry character was revealed. Arrogance is the attribute of the horse, while anger is the property of predatory beasts like the lion, the tiger and the wolf.

I kept you from worldliness, but your sensual nature became apparent. Sensuality is the donkey's attribute. So don't be angry with me. Don't suppose I have done something wrong. You have no capacity for becoming human. A man who is outwardly drunk can sober up in a mere three or four hours. But those who are inwardly intoxicated, drunk on self-righteousness like you, such people will never be sober till their heads hit the mortuary block."

As I was saying, inner purity is very hard to achieve.

Saint Niyazi Misri*
And The Fate Of His Mortal Remains

The Saints are always divinely favored with some blessing disguised as an affliction, and the venerable Niyazi Misri was no exception. In the time of Sultan Ahmed II, he was chained hand and foot and banished to the island of Limnos.

In the form of suffering the Divine Wisdom has demanded of particular saints, the mysteries associated with various Prophets are revealed to us. For instance, the imprisonment suffered by some is a manifestation of the mystery of Joseph the Prophet, peace be upon him. The mystery of the Prophet George* was revealed in the martyrdom of Saint Nesimi, who was flayed alive, and of Saint Ḥallāj, whose hands were cut off. In the fate of one like the noble Imam Ḥusayn,* who was beheaded

after dying of thirst, we see a manifestation of the mystery of the blessed Prophet, John the Baptist.

The exile endured by Saint Niyazi Misri, among others, reveals the mystery of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and give him peace, for our blessed Master was persecuted by the polytheists until the Lord commanded him to emigrate, to make the Hijra, from his native Mecca.

On the strength of denunciations lodged by Vani Effendi, the Sheikh al-Islam, Sultan Ahmed II had Niyazi Misri banished to the island of Limnos. There he was kept in chains until he passed on to the Realm of Divine Beauty, rejoining his beloved Lord, in Whom he had become annihilated and to Whom he had always been close. Being chained hand and foot, the Saint had of course been unable to perform his normal ablutions, yet the official washer of the dead professed disgust at the filthy condition of his body.

"How can they call you a Saint?" the man exclaimed. "Where is the sainthood in squalor like this? You seem to have neglected the most elementary rules of hygiene prescribed by the sacred law."

At these words, the venerable Misri sat upright on the mortuary slab where his body had been lying. "Tell me, sir," he asked, "after cleansing my inner self, what time had I to spare for cleansing my outer?" Then he lay back flat on the slab.

The official washer had seen with his own eyes what kind of Saint the venerable Misri must be in the sight of God. Filled with remorse, and repenting the things he had said, the man begged forgiveness as he kissed those noble feet and that blessed corpse. In accordance with the Saint's last wishes, the venerable Niyazi Misri was buried with his legs still in chains, and the ends of the chains were left outside the tomb.

My own revered teacher gave me the following account of a project to move the mortal remains of Saint Niyazi Misri:

"I heard the following from my spiritual guide.

Shemsuddin Effendi, Sheikh of the primary center of Niyazi Misri's Order in Bursa (which owed its preeminence to the fact that the venerable Niyazi himself had served there as its Sheikh), went to Limnos for the purpose of transferring the mortal remains of the Saint from there back to Bursa. He applied to the Greek government for permission to take the bones and other relics of the venerable Founder of the Order.

Sheikh Shemsuddin had invited us to attend the religious ceremonies that would be held to mark the re-interment in Bursa. I therefore went to that city with my revered teacher and several other Sheikhs, and there we awaited the arrival of Shemsuddin Effendi, who eventually returned from Limnos. He returned, but empty-handed.

This was the story he had to tell:

'I applied to the Greek authorities for permission to take the bones of the venerable Founder of our Order, but this is what they told me: 'Every night, we have Niyazi Effendi's lamp relit by two nuns. We clean and embellish his mausoleum every day. Each Friday, we have his banner unfurled and cause it to be waved. We always look after his mausoleum and tomb, keeping them in good repair.

You do not attach as much importance to such tasks as we do; we have heard how poorly you care for mausoleums. Besides, when our ships' captains sail past this island, they salute the

Saint by sounding their horns; they also ask for help through his spiritual influence. For all these reasons we cannot give you the remains of Misri Effendi.'

Thus they sent me home empty-handed."

As the Lord of Majesty tells us:

Those will prosper who purify themselves. (87:14)

The Ṭarīqa in Islam

In the context of the Islamic religion, the Ṭarīqa means the road that leads to the attainment of Divine Pleasure, by way of the Quran and the noble example of the blessed Messenger of Allah. The Arabic term for this path is ṭarīqa(t) - tarikat in Turkish, a derivative of the word ṭarīq, meaning "road, way; method." Travelers who embark upon this path are known by various names, such as "Sufi," "Dervish," "People of the Way."

The ways to God are too numerous for human knowledge and reckoning. We may safely restate that they are as many as all the breaths we breathe, and that every creature has the opportunity to recognize Allah and come to know Him. We are speaking, naturally, of those who are capable of submission to His will, and of possessing true faith.

Every human being is an open door, a way leading to Allah. But the greatest of these doors, and the shortest of these ways, is the door of true faith and submission, opened for us by the Most Noble Messenger at the Divine Command, and the way of the Straight Path, which is the way of the Quran and the Prophetic example. It is therefore very hard, one might say virtually impossible, to reach the Divine Truth and win His Pleasure by following lengthy routes and tortuous labyrinths.

The intelligent course is to take the short and direct route, avoiding the perils of the trackless desert wastes. The highway to the Truth is the road of Islam, illumined by the lamp of faith. It is known as Ahmad's Path or Muhammad's Way. To set forth on Ahmad's Path is to take the shortcut to union with the Divine Truth and the attainment of His Good Pleasure.

SHARĪ°A, ṬARĪQA, ḤAQĪQA AND MA°RIFA*

The exalted Ṭarīqa is the soul of the Sharī°a, which corresponds to the physical body. The Sharī°a, divinely decreed, and promulgated by the noble Messenger, prescribes our religious duties and obligations. Each of the great scriptural religions has a sharī°a. To follow the Ṭarīqa is to practice devotion while observing the outer forms of these commandments. With the revelation of the Quran, all previous scriptural codes were abrogated, so that only the Shari°a of Muhammad remains in force, as it shall until the Resurrection.

Under the Sharī°a a person can be compelled to perform the ritual prayer. But sincere devotion cannot be induced by force. On the Ṭarīqa, therefore, a person is taught how to devote his prayers to Allah in true sincerity, in such a way that he also begins to experience the joy of worship.

If the Sharī°a has to do with hearing and obeying, the Ṭarīqa is about seeing and knowing. The Ṭarīqa teaches how acts of worship and good deeds should be performed for the sake of Allah and His approval, thereby giving the worshipper a taste of that Divine good pleasure.

The Ṭarīqa imbues our actions with pure intention and sincere devotion along the Way of Truth. The Sharī°a represents the words communicated by Allah's Messenger. The Ṭarīqa represents the actions of Allah's Messenger, that is, his religious and worldly behavior and conduct.

The Ḥaqīqa represents the blessed state of Allah's Messenger. The Ma°rifa represents the sublime mystery of Allah's Messenger.

The Exercise of Independent Judgment

In religion, the exercise of independent judgment is not merely permissible but necessary. This is true both for the Sharī°a and also for the Ṭarīqa. Just as an effort is required to determine the import of the Prophet's words, a corresponding effort must be directed toward the significance of his actions, the inner aspect of the Law. On the Ṭarīqa, where the task is certainly more difficult, this exercise of independent judgment is the prerogative of the spiritual guides.

Returning from a campaign, our blessed Master the Prophet said: "We return from the lesser war, to wage the greater war." When his noble Companions asked what enemy they must face in this greater war, the venerable Messenger replied: "Our own selves!"

This struggle with the lower self can be waged only by following the Ṭarīqa. To exercise one's faculties in the sphere of legal judgment is like battling with the external foe, while in the spiritual realm it resembles the battle with the lower self. Outwardly, we must strive to act in conformity with the Sharī°a. By following the Ṭarīqa, we strive for the love and purity of intention that will make our actions not merely lawful, but truly worthy.

Actions are valued according to intentions, said the blessed Prophet.

Did the Ṭarīqa exist in the time of the Prophet?

Every divine Messenger was sent as a spiritual guide, which means that the Ṭarīqa exists in all religions. As the Seal of the Prophets, our blessed Master Muhammad is the spiritual guide of all his predecessors. His Book is the Holy Quran. His religion is Islam. His Ṭarīqa is the Straight Path, the Way of Islam.

The following Verse refers to our blessed Master as both Messenger and spiritual guide, clearly establishing the existence of the Ṭarīqa within the religion of Islam.

He it is Who has sent among people without formal learning a Messenger of their own, to recite to them His revelations and to make them grow in purity, and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom, though formerly they were in flagrant error. (62:2)

In his own blessed lifetime, the noble Prophet was personally responsible for giving instruction on every aspect of religion and faith. His was the school in which the entire community learned its lessons in Sharī°a, Ṭarīqa, Ḥaqīqa, Ma°rifa, friendship, loving affection and service.

In the Glorious Quran as it was revealed to him, in his utterances, in his actions and the example he set by them, the essential structure of Islam, as we know it today, was already present in all its dimensions: the doctrines of jurisprudence, the spiritual directions, the direct experiences, the mystical knowledge.

Be it in the realms of the Sharī°a or Ṭarīqa, all subsequent developments were rooted in the Holy Quran and the Prophetic model, from which they were elaborated by rigorous study and careful exercise of judgment. There was no room for mere personal opinion, unsubstantiated by the fundamental sources. Those sources were never in question.

Independent judgment was brought to bear on the branches of the religion, not upon its roots. Differences between great scholars of Islamic jurisprudence, for instance between Imām Shāfi°ī and Imām Abū Ḥanīfa, are therefore confined to secondary particulars. It is a great mistake to regard their schools of jurisprudence as conflicting sects.

A similar process of elaboration can be traced in the development of the Ṭarīqa. For example, the founder of a certain Order, a saintly man well qualified to resolve such questions, could maintain the view, on the basis of certain Verses from the Glorious Quran, that Divine Remembrance, Dhikrullāh, should be performed audibly and in public. Meanwhile, another authority could reach a different conclusion, citing a different Verse or a noble Ḥadīth* in favor of silent and private remembrance of Allah.

Notice that the practice of Divine Remembrance itself would not be in question here; the exercise of independent judgment would be confined to secondary matters, relating to the proper manner in which that remembrance ought to be performed.

The Lord tells us in His Book that He created mankind in a variety of colors, shapes and temperaments. Our example shows how temperamental differences may give rise to a preference for quiet Dhikr or for audible Dhikr. Both can find support from the Holy Quran and the Sunna, which allow people of all temperaments to experience the joy of Divine Remembrance.

As taught by the noble Messenger in person, and then by his early followers, Islam embraced all the facets and dimensions which later terminology would assign to separate categories. For example, while enunciating the principles that should govern external behavior, that is the rules of Sharī°a, he would describe the internal state-of-being necessary as the foundation of proper conduct, that is, the work of the Ṭarīqa.

The correct verbal formulation of faith and belief is part of the Sharī°a, while the correct attitude, the underlying sincerity of heart, falls in the province of the Ṭarīqa.

The blessed Prophet concerned himself with both of these, and more, as we see from his response to a query

about a dimension of religion that transcends and perfects submission (Islām) and faith (Imān).

The blessed angel Gabriel came to him one day, and asked: "What is meant by 'active goodness' (Iḥsān), O Messenger of Allah?" The King of Prophets replied: "It means worshipping Allah as if you saw Him, for even though you do not see Him, He certainly sees you."

Fulfilling his Prophetic mission, our blessed Master provided the basic teaching and instruction on every level: legal, spiritual, experiential, mystical, philosophical, self-purificatory. On the foundation established by him, the various schools of thought and the different mystical Orders would gradually evolve, shaped by the judgment of their respective leaders and authorities.

In the legal sphere, the preeminent scholars proved to be the venerable Imams Abū Ḥanīfa, Shāfi°ī, Ibn Ḥanbal and Mālik, eponyms of the four great schools of Islamic jurisprudence, each recognizing the others as equally valid.

The Ṭarīqa also had its exponents, among them the noble Caliphs Abū Bakr, °Umar, °Uthmān and °Alī, may Allah be pleased with them.

Saints as well have been exponents of the Ṭarīqa, among them Uways al-Qaranī*, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī*, Ḥabīb al-°Ajamī*, Dāwud al-Ṭā'ī*, Ma°rūf al-Karkhī*, Sarī al-Saqaṭī*, Junayd al-Baghdādī* and Qāḍi Wāḥiduddīn*.

A tree does not bear fruit as soon as it is planted. A certain period of time must elapse before the fruit is formed and ripe. In essence, the fruit is already present within the tree at the moment of planting. It is latent as yet, awaiting the passage of time before it can emerge. Similarly, the developments latent within the basic structure of Islam would take time to develop.

There is only one way to purify the heart, and that is by following the religion of Islam and by traveling the Ṭarīqa of Muhammad.

The Sharī°a stands in the same relation to the Ṭarīqa as milk does to butter. Just as you cannot make butter without milk, you cannot have the Ṭarīqa without the Sharī°a. You may take the trouble to separate the two, leaving the Sharī°a by itself, like buttermilk. But if you wish to savor the delight of religion, to experience the joy of faith, you will not try to separate the milk and the butter from each other.

As we have already explained, the Sharī°a can be likened to a physical body, of which the Ṭarīqa is the soul. In religious terms, the Sharī°a is the speech of the Messenger, while the Ṭarīqa corresponds to the Messenger's conduct in action and to his state of being.

The Role of the Spiritual Guide

Murshid*

Unless the task were eased for us by special blessing of Divine Grace, we should find it difficult indeed to purify our lower nature by our own unaided efforts. Consider the treatment of physical disorders. Even a doctor finds it very hard to treat himself, and he usually needs to call in another doctor. Spiritual treatment is undoubtedly more difficult and demanding than its physical counterpart.

It follows that if we seek treatment for our inner nature, we must have recourse to a representative of the blessed Prophet, who can write a prescription from the Noble Quran, recommending medicine from the pharmacy of the blessed Messenger Muhammad. Our ailment will be cured if we accept the advice of such an expert physician, and faithfully carry out the instructions of this true guide.

You may embark on this path without a guide, but in that case you cannot hope to reach your goal without the special favor of Divine Providence. Unguided, the typical pilgrim cannot reach the Ka°ba in Mecca. On his first pilgrimage, even the most learned scholar cannot circumambulate the Ka°ba without a circuit-guide (muṭawwif) to show him the way. If one cannot find one's own way around the Ka°ba, a building erected by the blessed Abraham, surely a spiritual guide is indispensable when it comes to circuiting the heart, the abode of Divine Vision?

The proper study of religion is impossible without a teacher. A student can read the text of the Quran on his own, but correct recitation must be learned and taught by the method of oral tradition, otherwise errors will be made. If a relatively simple task like Quran

recitation is too difficult for the unaided student, then it follows that the help of a spiritual guide is absolutely essential to those who seek to discover the Divine mysteries, and who desire to gain the pleasure of the All-Merciful Lord.

Certain individuals have as their guide the Divine Truth Himself. A member of this special group is termed "Uwaysī." Another special class consists of those honored beings who, under the auspices of departed Saints, are endowed with spiritual grace. Such people have no more formal learning than a newborn baby. Without taking lessons from anyone, they receive Divine Guidance directly and through the spiritual influence of the Saints, the intimate friends of the Truth.

For ordinary folk like us, however, there is no substitute for a spiritual guide to show us the true path. It behooves us to submit our imperfect selves to the treatment prescribed by this guide, to control our unbridled passions, to purify the heart, to love Allah, and to work for admission to His presence by following in the radiant footsteps of His Messenger.

"Where are you going?" the ant was asked.
"To the Ka°ba," the tiny creature replied.
"At this pace?"
"Yes indeed! At this pace I may fail to reach the Ka°ba, but I shall die on the way there."

Every action is valued by its intention. Let it be our intention to make ourselves inwardly as well as outwardly human, and let us exert our efforts to that end. The effort is up to us, but success depends on Allah. Though we may fail to reach our destination, we shall die, like the ant, on the journey toward our goal. Intention being the criterion, we must surely obtain the same reward in either case.

Let us join a flock belonging to a saint. A flock is sold as a single lot, including odd specimens that happen to be underweight, sickly, mangy or scabby. The owner's name is mentioned, and a deal is made for the lot. If we join a flock belonging to a saint, we shall undoubtedly benefit from the good bargain that will be driven on account of our betters.

Love and Affection

O Noble and Generous Lord,
You created these servants of Yours
And brought them into being
Out of a drop of fluid.
We dare not presume to love You,
And we could not have loved You,
If You had not loved us.
Had You not remembered us,
We could not have remembered You.
Just as our loving You
Is due to Your loving us,
Our remembering You
Is surely due to Your remembering us,
And to Your Divine Help.

Affection means mutual loving. To have affection for Allah must therefore mean to enjoy a mutually loving relationship with the All-Glorious One.

Unless God loves a creature, that creature cannot love God. Affection between man and God can therefore arise only if God first desires it. Only then does man experience an affection for the Divine Truth.

As we become followers of the noble Messenger, we creatures begin to feel the attraction of our Creator's love for us. The more we persevere, the stronger that mutual affection grows, until it brings us to the Seat of Truthfulness. Even in this world blessings abound for those who reach this stage.

To them the lovers' secret is revealed. The Truth is the eye with which they see, the Truth is the ear with which they hear, the Truth is the tongue with which they speak, the Truth is the foot with which they tread. With the Truth they exist, with the Truth they persist. When they die, the earth does not consume their flesh and blood. They do not turn to dust, nor are they left in darkness.

Those who obey Allah and the Messenger
are with those whom Allah has favored:
The Prophets, the saints, the martyrs and the righteous.
What noble company they are! (4:69)

Such Is the Exalted One's affection for His servants, and such is the affection they must bring. This affection stems from no ulterior motive, only from desire for God Himself. For the great among God's people, it is not enough to love the Lord in hope of Paradise or from fear of Hell. That is why venerable Sheikhs instruct their disciples to follow the Affirmation of Divine Unity with the invocation of the Name of Majesty (*Allah*) and the Divine Essence (*Hū*), thereby ensuring that their remembrance is clearly addressed to the Divine Essence directly.

If a dervish were to invoke the Exalted Lord by another glorious Name, addressing Him with "O Provider *(Yā Razzāq)*!" for instance, he would be saying by implication: "O Lord, provide me with Your sustenance, material and spiritual."

The Sheikh Who Was Teased By The Lord

A devout Sheikh was at his worship one day, when he heard a voice crying from the unseen: "My servant, however much you worship Me, I shall consign you to My Fire. Your place is in My Hell!"

Hearing these words, the venerable Sheikh leapt with fright. He ran off to find his spiritual guide, to whom he reported what had happened.

"Go," said his teacher. "Continue your worship. That is your duty. We perform our duty as servants; it is up to Allah to choose our destination, be it Hell or Paradise. But don't worry about it. The Lord is teasing you."

The venerable Sheikh took his teacher's advice and returned to his devotions. Again he heard the mysterious voice, but this time he rejoiced at the words: "You are My servant. I am your Lord."

The Caliph And The Ugly Concubine

The °Abbāsid Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd had a concubine who was unattractive to the point of ugliness. The courtiers could not understand why their master should love this ugly girl more than any of her beautiful rivals, and someone eventually asked him to explain the reason. The Caliph replied by offering a demonstration.

Summoning all his concubines, he opened the door of his private treasure-house, which was filled with gold and jewels, and told them to go inside and take whatever they might desire. The women were very happy to comply. They plunged into the treasure-house and started collecting all the precious objects and ornaments they could lay their hands on. The only exception was the ugly concubine. She took nothing, and did not even enter the treasure-house.

"Why don't you help yourself to something?" asked the Caliph, who was surveying the scene. "Go on inside and take a few things!"

But the girl replied: "All I want is to serve you. You are all I need. You are the one I love, and your approval is quite enough for me."

Turning to his courtiers, Hārūn al-Rashīd exclaimed: "Now you see why I love this concubine more than all the others!"

Then he addressed the girl herself, saying: "Because of this inner beauty of yours, I love you too. I am very pleased with you. Your every wish shall be my command."

If you love Allah, you dare not let any other into your heart without suffering dire consequences. Heavy indeed is the penalty incurred by the false lover, who betrays his beloved by looking for another.

A Lover's Fickleness Revealed

A man once followed a beautiful woman around for several days. At the first suitable opportunity, he sidled up to her and declared his love. "How beautiful you are!" he cried. "I'm quite unsettled by your shapeliness and charm."

As he went on in this vein, the lady said: "Your words are very fine, but my sister is coming along behind me. She is far more attractive than I am, so I suggest you choose her instead." The eloquent suitor spun around, gasping: "Where is she?!"

At that moment he felt a sharp slap on the back of his neck. As this false lover reeled under the impact of her blow, the beauty exclaimed: "I thought you said you were in love with me. Some love, I must say! The moment I mentioned a prettier woman, you turned your head to look for her. You don't know the meaning of love. I acted as I did to prove to you that you are nothing but a false lover. Be off with you! You'd better not talk of love again, it's not your strong suit."

True lovers are tongue-tied, but their tears, their pale cheeks, and their trembling limbs bespeak their state of being.

The Grocer Who Fell In Love

A grocer once fell in love with a lady who lived nearby. One day, the lady sent her maid to buy some groceries from his shop. The man described his condition to the girl, and instructed her to tell her mistress about it. He spoke of the lady's beauty:

her cypress-like figure, her rosy cheeks, her curly locks, her almond eyes, her soft speech, her pearl-like teeth, her silken hair.

The maid went home and told her mistress what the grocer had said. The lady asked: "Was he trembling all over as he said these things about me? Did he stammer and turn pale?"

When the maid answered "Yes", the lady said: "In that case there is no need for this great spate of words. I realize that the grocer is genuinely in love with me. When you mention the name of the one you love, your tongue becomes tied and you tremble hand and foot. What more need be put into words?"

Those who do not drink this wine of love, though they be human in appearance, cannot be human within. Human can be spelled with only four letters: L-O-V-E.

The Seven Degrees of Affection

COMPATABILITY
One person is attracted to another because they are suited to each other by nature and constitution. In other words, A likes B because A sees in B the very qualities he himself possesses or prefers. Close friendship may develop in time.

PROPENSITY
A positive inclination is felt toward the object of affection. Such inclination is selfish in character, for when the self inclines toward something it rejects everything else. The stronger the propensity, the more exclusive it becomes, tending toward the third degree of affection.

FONDNESS
When the self has reached this stage, it desires to spend every moment in the company of the object of its inclination, admiring the looks and speech of its chosen one. This stage merges into the fourth degree.

HEART'S DESIRE
At this stage, the lover casts all but the loved one out of his heart. Even in his thoughts there is no room for anything but the beloved.

DISTRACTION
This is the state of a mother who has lost her child. In her utter bewilderment, she mistakes every child she sees for her own. Like that mother, those who have reached the fifth stage of affection will see their loved one everywhere. They seize on the slightest trace of the beloved, for they are in a state of bewilderment and intoxication. The intensity of their affection makes them blind.

ABANDON
At this stage, one ceases to feel the pain of sorrow and misfortune. There is no room in the heart for anything at all beside one's affection for the beloved.

LOVE
This is really a separate subject in its own right, since love transcends by far all other degrees of affection. It may be called ultimate affection.

In Arabic, love is termed °ishq, and this word is a cognate of °ashaqa, the name of a certain kind of ivy. Unlike ordinary parasites, which merely sponge off their hosts, the °ashaqa plant consumes all the sap of the large trees around which it twines, causing them to wither and die.

Love behaves in much the same way.

Once smitten with love, a person loses all his power and strength. Love plunders his entire being, and takes him over completely. Rational thought is thrown to the wind, self-interest no longer matters, eating and drinking are forgotten.

The lover takes no account of his own profit or loss. He remembers only his beloved. He will meet with no one else, speak with no one else. He falls into ecstasy, becomes crazed and consumed by the fire of his love. The mark of love is utter renunciation and ruination of oneself and everything else for the sake of the beloved. The lover glories in self-destruction for love's sake.

Sacrifice is the very emblem of lover-hood, sacrifice of one's possessions, honor, even life itself - all for the sake of the beloved.

Love, °ishq, is the most advanced and highest level of affection. Genuine human affection is Divine Affection, that is, being a lover of the Truth.

Divine Affection is aroused by God's Affection for His servant. Moreover, when the All-Glorious One has affection for a servant of His, He causes that servant to be loved by all who know Him and love His Exalted Essence. All creatures love and obey the beloved servant of Allah.

Divine Remembrance

Dhikrullāh

For those who would make the Journey of Ascent, in quest of the Divine Truth from Whom the Journey of Descent began, the shortest route of return is by Remembrance of Allah, Dhikrullāh.

According to the Masters of Truth and Reality, Divine Remembrance is on three levels.

The Remembrance of the Typical Person
This is called "Verbal Remembrance," and may be performed audibly and in public or silently and in private.

The Remembrance of the Elite
This is called "Remembrance of the Heart," and is performed by heart and tongue in unison.

The Remembrance of the Elite of the Elite
These have inherited the Mystery, and their hearts are in a permanent state of Divine Remembrance. Their eyes may sleep, but never their hearts, for they have attained the mystical state referred to by our blessed Master, the King of Prophets, when he said:

"My eyes are asleep,
yet my heart is awake, never asleep."

Even when they are at work, their hearts are not distracted from the remembrance of Allah. Such remembrance is no longer an act of will, but is performed by the heart involuntarily. It is called "The Remembrance of the 'Child of the Heart'*."

We have it on the authority of the Masters of Truth and Reality that the heart can mystically conceive and give birth to a "child." Like a physical infant, the Child of

the Heart may be male or female. If it is male, the owner of the heart will acquire the character of a spiritual guide and will become a source of guidance to others. If it is female, the person will belong to the People of Truth and Reality, but will not be able to give spiritual direction to others.

The Masters of the Path distinguish the following Seven Classes of Dhikr.

Audible Dhikr (public)
Silent Dhikr (private)
Dhikr of the Heart
Dhikr of the Soul
Dhikr of the Soul's Secret
Dhikr of the Inner Heart's Secret
Dhikr of the Secret of the Secret

The words pronounced in Remembrance of Allah by the typical person may be identical with those of the Elite. In meaning and degree, however, they are very different.

Saint Junayd Shows A Man How To Walk Across The Tigris

A man was waiting for a ferry to carry him across the River Tigris. As he was looking out for a boat, a person came by and greeted him.

When he explained his situation, the new-comer said: "Come, let me take you across to the other side!"

"How will you do that?" asked the man. "On foot," the new-comer replied, in a perfectly calm and natural manner.

Then he added: "Hold my hand and walk, saying: 'Just as he says, just as he says'."

"Who are you?" asked the man, suppressing his amazement.

"They call me Junayd of Baghdad."

Holding hands, the pair started walking on the water together. The venerable Junayd kept on repeating "Allah, Allah," while his companion kept repeating the words: "As the Sheikh says, as the Sheikh says." But when they were halfway across the river, the man began to imitate his guide. He also pronounced the Name of Majesty, only to find himself sinking!

Saint Junayd pulled him to the surface, saying: "My dear fellow, have you made your mouth worthy to start mentioning Allah's Name in Divine Remembrance? See how you sank right away! Leave the remembrance to me. Confine yourself to repeating: 'Just as the Sheikh said.' Otherwise you will drown."

The Light of the Prophets and Saints

To all believers who affirm the Oneness of God, it is clear as day that all the Prophets and Saints are one light. The Prophets are the "Light of the Essence of Allah," while the Saints are the "Light of Allah's Countenance." Every believing follower of the beloved Muhammad is endowed from eternity with a spiritual capacity, by virtue of which he becomes heir to the spirituality of a particular prophet or saint. As for the unbelievers, they become the inheritors of Satan and his cohorts.

On the Day of Resurrection, each community will be assembled behind the leader it used to follow. It therefore behooves us to choose our leader from among the friends of Allah.

As we have said, all the Prophets and Saints are one light. Since the light is single, multiplicity exists only in the eye of the beholder. If a person were to be set in a room with a hundred thousand mirrors, he would seem to be multiplied a hundred thousand times. In reality, however, he would be one single person.

We must not be deceived by appearances, by the reflection in the mirror. This universe consists of such an innumerable multiplicity of mirrors, but what they reflect is a single Being. What is witnessed in the apparently endless multiplicity of creation is the Most Holy Essence, which is really One. Should the mirror lose its silvering, there would be no mirror-image. But the absence of an image does not prove that the person does not exist. It is rather an indication of something wrong with the mirror, or perhaps with the eyesight of the one who is looking.

It is our religious duty to believe in all the Prophets and Messengers, who represent varied manifestations of the same light. To reject even one of them is tantamount

to rejecting them all. This also applies to the Saints of Allah: to denounce one is to denounce them all.

Ahmad's Light is the starting-point of the Prophetic chain, which culminates in Muhammad's Light. That golden chain begins with the light of Aḥmad the Chosen, and it is sealed with the Light of his Prophethood.

All the Prophets who preceded our blessed Master, the King and Seal of Prophets, and the Saints who followed them, took their light from Ahmad's Light and enlightened people with the light of the Affirmation of Divine Unity.

La ilaha illallah
There is no god but God

The miracles made manifest through the Prophets, and the special powers bestowed upon the Saints, are all in reality derived from the Most Noble Messenger, and their honor belongs to that King of Prophets and Leader of Saints. All the Saints, the friends of Allah, who followed our blessed Master onto this world's stage, became the inheritors of his attribute of "Sainthood."

The Great Scholars are the heirs to his attribute of "Messengership." Every Saint is a scholar, but his attribute of knowledge is concealed, whereas his attribute of Sainthood is manifest. Likewise every scholar is a Saint, but here the attributes are reversed.

All the Saints will transmit the light they have inherited from our blessed Master until the Day of Resurrection.

Every Prophet has his heirs, and our Master, the Final Prophet, is no exception. The scholars are the heirs to his knowledge, and the wise are the heirs to his state. The term "Cardinal Saint," Quṭb*, is applied to one who inherits the knowledge, the forbearance, the state and

the being of the Lord's Beloved. In every century until the Resurrection, one such Cardinal Saint appears, and is known as the Supreme Helper of the Age.

There are two kinds of Cardinal Saint: the Cardinal of Guidance and the Cardinal of Support.

The Cardinal of Guidance is simultaneously the Cardinal of Support, but one who has attained only to the station of Support is not authorized to provide spiritual guidance. In this respect, we may recall that every Messenger is also a Prophet, whereas not every Prophet is a Messenger.

In the Sainthood of the Cardinal of Guidance, it is our Master's Messenger-attribute that is manifest, while his Prophet-attribute is manifest in the Sainthood of the Cardinal of Support. Since the attribute of Prophethood is comprised within the attribute of Messengership, the Cardinal of Guidance, as heir to the latter, is on an even higher plane than the Cardinal of Support.

If the Sainthood of the Prophets, being God-oriented, may be considered "superior" to their mankind-oriented Messengership, this must never be misconstrued as meaning "the Saints are superior to the Prophets." There can be no question of a Saint being superior to a Prophet, for the Saint's special powers are always derived from the particular Prophet he or she follows.

The Human Elements and The Laws of Celestial Motion

Through the power of Allah, the human body is made up from three constituent elements: the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal.

By the will of Allah and through His knowledge and power, the operation of the Laws of Celestial Motion enriches the mineral content of the earth. Plants grow in the earth. The growth of animals is then nourished by those plants. Then human beings eat both the animals and the plants. One fortieth part of the food consumed by man is converted into blood. Forty drops of blood produce one drop of seminal fluid, and forty drops of seminal fluid produce one sperm.

This sperm is called the Essence of Man. This Essence carries the secret of the Lord's Words: "I was a hidden treasure." Outwardly it is a substance resembling clotted blood, but mystically it is the First Intellect and the Relative Soul.

The human essence is transferred from the father into the mother's womb, where it develops under celestial influence. The planet Saturn governs its transformation into blood. Flesh and skin form under the influence of Jupiter, as do the bones, sinews and veins. Life enters the embryo through the influence of the Sun and of Venus. Movement and voice are induced by Mercury, while the Moon's influence is responsible for growth and development. Thus, through the power of Allah, the sperm acquires human shape within the mother's womb.

Four elements are consummated in this process.

The coagulation of the blood is governed by the element Fire.

The formation of flesh and skin, by the element Water.

The building of bone, sinew and vein, by the element Earth.

The quickening of life, by the element Air.

Finally, the influence of Saturn and Jupiter comes into play once again, as the complete human form leaves its mother's womb and comes crying into this world. Tiny though it is, that new-born infant conceals within its being a mighty universe, already containing all that exists in the eighteen-thousand worlds.

The Five Spirits

(Arwāh*)

The living human being comprises five spirits:

The Vegetable Spirit *(rūḥ nabātī)*
Its mystical station (*maqām*) is the liver, and its physical location (*makān*) is at the roots of the hair on the body.

The Animal Spirit *(rūh ḥaywānī)*
Its station is between blood and flesh, and its location is in the bulk of the body.

The Sensual or Mental Spirit *(rūh nafsānī)*
Its station is gray matter, and its location is the brain.

The Human Spirit *(rūh insānī)*
Its station is the heart and its location is the chest.

The Royal Spirit *(rūh sulṭānī)*
Its station and location are the innermost heart.

There is a sixth spirit, over and above those listed, namely the Secret Spirit (*rūḥ-i sirr*).

This has neither station nor location. It is neither inside nor outside this body of ours. Its nature is known only to Allah, the Lord of Majesty. It is among the manifestations of His Name *Ḥayy*, "The Living One."

They will ask you about the Spirit. Say: "The Spirit is at my Lord's command; you have been granted only a little knowledge." (17:85)

In this noble Verse of the Holy Quran, the "Spirit (which) is at my Lord's Command" is the Secret Spirit, while the "little knowledge" we have been granted refers to the other five spirits.

The Four Gates and The Forty Stages on The Way of Truth

First Gate: The Gate of the Sharīa
To enter, one must satisfy ten conditions. The first five are the familiar Pillars of Islam, namely:

The Testimony of Faith.
Ritual Prayer.
Almsgiving.
Fasting.
Pilgrimage.

To these, the Masters of the Mystical Path have added the following five:

Lawful earning and lawful spending.
Abstaining from unlawful things, both material and spiritual.
Marriage.
Occasional battle with the external foe, but constant battle with the lower self.
Promoting the complete fulfillment of God's commandments, and preventing their violation.

Second Gate: The Gate of the Ṭarīqa
Here again we meet with ten conditions, namely:

Sincere repentance and seeking forgiveness.
Reformation of character.
Devoted service to a perfect guide.
Fear of Allah without despair of His mercy.
Renunciation of worldly pleasures for love of the Truth alone.
Self-sacrifice in Allah's cause, striving to keep the approval of Allah.
Ensuring that one is always pleasing to the Founding Saint of the Order of the Ṭarīqa to which one belongs (or to the Sheikh).
Exact performance of the litanies (awrād) and remembrances set for one by the Sheikh.

Following the Sheikh's advice, and avoiding contradictory behavior.
Emptying one's heart of all attachment to wealth or children, filling it instead with the love of Allah and His Messenger.

Third Gate: The Gate of Ḥaqīqa
Again there are ten conditions, namely:
Abject humility.
Religious tolerance.
Few expectations.
Causing no harm to any creature.
Hurting no person's feelings.
Kind and generous treatment of the poor.
Traveling the prescribed way of Allah.
Learning from all one sees.
Constant and heart-felt supplication to Allah.
Approaching as close as one is able to the knowledge of Allah and His mystery.

Fourth Gate: The Gate of Ma°rifa
This final gate also presents ten conditions:
Propriety in controlling one's hands, tongue and sexuality.
Struggling with the self to the point where it becomes compliant.
Observing solitude.
Complete and confident acceptance of the teachings of Allah's Saints.
Modesty (as the blessed Prophet said, "Modesty is part of true faith.")
Generosity and hospitality.
Distinguishing Truth from falsehood.
Forbearance, with anger and wrath toward no one.
Self-knowledge.
Attaining closeness to the Truth.

Every Ṭarīqa certainly leads to the Truth.

The important tasks along this way are to control one's lower nature, to obey completely and with due reverence the commandments of Allah, to treat all creatures with compassion and to observe the noble example of Allah's Messenger.

The aspirant must also know the names of the Twelve Imams* and the Fourteen Innocents.* He must know and love Muhammad's family, Muhammad's wives, and Muhammad's offspring, as well as the Companions and Helpers of our blessed Master. He is also obliged to show respect and affection for all the Saints, Sheikhs and Masters of the Spiritual Path.

PART TWO

TELLI BABA

Telli Baba is the popular name of a noble Saint, properly called Abdullah, who was a Sheikh of the Qadiri Order. Committed heart and soul to the service of Allah and the way of life exemplified by His Messenger, he shared the benefits of his spiritual achievements with all who came to him for help, regardless of their religious or sectarian persuasions. Muslim visitors enjoy his intercession on both the worldly and the eternal plane, while others find consolation in his asking Allah to help them with their earthly problems.

Telli Baba

In the Name of Allah,
All-Merciful and Compassionate
Praise and glory be to Allah,
Most Exalted and Holy,
Who has granted us countless blessings,
Both material and spiritual.

Those of us who reside in Istanbul are especially fortunate, for in our great city are the tombs of many Saints, those intimate friends of the Divine Truth, who are enlightened by the Holy Quran, who are colored with Allah's dye, *sibghat Allah*. They are endowed with conscious faith and submission, manifesting the glorious promise: "No fear is upon them, nor shall they grieve."

We offer our benedictions and salutations to the chief of the Prophets, the support of the Saints and the Pure Ones. Most perfect greetings to our blessed Master Muhammad, and to his family and offspring, to his wives, his companions and helpers, his followers and friends. May his spiritual influence help us to achieve our aims and goals in this world and in the Hereafter, and may we benefit from following his pure example.

Mausoleums and tombs of Saints can be found in every city, town and village in Turkey. Many of these Saints were martyrs, whose heroic self-sacrifice represents an inspiring model for our younger generations. Hundreds or even thousands of such tombs are still found in regions beyond our present national frontiers, where our Saints are remembered with honor and respect, not only by Muslims but by other races, religions and creeds, as in the capital of Hungary.

Among the roses on the green hills of Buda (or Budin, as this half of the twin city of Budapest was formerly

known), lies the mausoleum of a Friend of Allah who is simply known as Gül (Rose) Baba, his real name is long since forgotten.The tomb of this great Turk is visited to this day by many travelers from Europe, Asia and other parts of the world, who come to pay their humble respects. It could well be said that Gül Baba's mausoleum represents a splendid memorial to Turkish rule in Central Europe.

Another example is the luminous resting place of Saint Niyazi Misri which is to be found on the Aegean island of Limnos, Greece. Sheikh Shemsuddin of Bursa once led a delegation to Limnos, with the intention of bringing the blessed remains of this Saint to Turkey, but the local priests and officials objected.

"We cannot agree to the removal of the blessed Niyazi Misri. We feel the most profound respect and attachment for him, even though he was not of our race or religion. You could never hold him in such honor and esteem as we do. Our nuns light the lamps in his mausoleum every evening. On Fridays, we hoist his flag on the harbor wall. Our captains and seamen seek his blessings when they pray for a safe voyage. He is our guarantee of prosperity and good fortune. We simply cannot part from him." I heard from my own late teacher how Shemsuddin Effendi had been sent away with these words.

Unfortunately, many tombs and mausoleums in Turkey have been allowed to fall into a lamentable state of disrepair. We Muslims should recognize the urgent need to rectify this situation, especially in Istanbul. Our main purpose here is to direct attention to one particular place of visitation, the mausoleum of Telli Baba.

Telli Baba is the popular name of a noble Saint, properly called Abdullah, who was a Sheikh of the Qadiri Order. Committed heart and soul to the service of Allah and the way of life exemplified by His

Messenger, he shared the benefits of his spiritual achievements with all who came to him for help, regardless of their religious or sectarian persuasions. Muslim visitors enjoy his intercession on both the worldly and the eternal plane, while others find consolation in his asking Allah to help them with their earthly problems.

The soul of a Saint wields power in both worlds,
So do not say, how can help come from a corpse.
The soul is the sword of God, the body is its sheath,
Now drawn, the naked blade works best.

For the followers of the Sunna of the Prophet, there is no more difficulty in accepting the miraculous powers of the Saints, than in accepting their intercession and the intercession of the Prophets.

The place that is now Telli Baba's mausoleum was the cell where he devoted himself to solitary worship and supplication. His dervishes buried him there when he passed on into the Realm of Beauty, and made his luminous tomb a place of pious visitation which has been visited by people in all walks of life, and will surely continue to be until the Day of Resurrection. Telli Baba has never disappointed those who visit his tomb. They have invariably had their wishes granted by Allah the Exalted.

The blessed mausoleum is situated on the European side of the Bosphorus. It is a heavenly spot, within earshot of the divine remembrance and glorification murmured by the blue waters. Hundreds of Muslims and non-Muslims come there every day, some to present their wishes and longings, some returning again to fulfill the vows they made before their wishes were granted. Telli Baba provides intercession for all who are suffering, and gives the disappointed an opportunity to realize their hopes.

The childless come with their wish for children, the homeless for a house, the unmarried for a partner, the

sick and the troubled for healing and remedy. I am personally acquainted with several of those whose wishes have been fulfilled, and I have heard of hundreds more. The reader may be interested in my own experience.

Although I had been married for twenty-four years, I had not fathered any children. One day, following the insistent advice of a friend, I paid a visit to Telli Baba. For Allah's pleasure, I first offered two cycles of ritual prayer in the nearby mosque. Then I made my prayer of supplication, beseeching the Lord to grant me a daughter or a son to bless my memory and carry on my name. I wept as I made this request of my Lord, and I vowed that if my wish should be granted, I would offer seventy thousand Affirmations of Divine Unity and three complete readings of the Holy Quran for the sake of Telli Baba's soul. As I left I took a silver thread from the top of Telli Baba's sarcophagus.

I was fifty years of age and through all my married years I had sadly remained childless. But now within the short space of a year, the Exalted One granted me a lovely, golden-haired daughter. Praise be to Allah, I had obtained my cherished wish!

In fulfillment of my vow, I completed three recitations of the Holy Quran and seventy thousand Affirmations of Divine Unity. Then I returned to the spiritual presence of Telli Baba, taking back the piece of silver thread and many more in addition. After performing a ritual prayer of two cycles for the sake of Allah's pleasure, I offered the merit earned in fulfilling my vow to the triumphant soul of the blessed Saint.

By Allah's leave I had now achieved my desire, but my wife and friends still wanted me to have a son to carry on my name. For me personally, life was as happy as could be. I had a beautiful, healthy and intelligent daughter, for whom I could not thank my Lord enough. At every opportunity, I would go on a Saturday to visit the mausoleum of Telli Baba, offering *Fatihas* for his

soul, praying in his mosque, and turning to my Lord with supplications and praise.

We lived in an apartment building where my little girl was deprived of sunshine and fresh air. On one of my customary visits to Telli Baba, I felt inspired enough to ask Allah for a summer house where my baby could enjoy fresh air and sunshine, and also for a son to carry my name and bless my memory. How could these demands possibly diminish the abundance of Allah's wealth!

Allah deprives neither the disobedient nor the unbelievers who deny His divinity, so would he abandon a believer who prostrates to His Essence of Oneness, and has faith in His existence and in His beloved Messenger?

This reflection prompted me to open my hands in supplication:

"Oh my Lord, if You grant me these two wishes, I vow that I will complete six readings of the Holy Quran, as well as twice seventy thousand Affirmations of Divine Unity, for Your good pleasure and for the soul of the Saint who lies buried here. In honor of this noble being, I beg you not to disappoint me!"

With complete trust I then took a few silver threads from the Saint's tomb.

Only two months elapsed before my wife showed signs of pregnancy. About the same time, I had a conversation with a friend who happened to be a building contractor at a summer resort.
"Effendi," he said, "you need a villa. Your children must have fresh air and sunshine."
"I recognize the need," I replied, "but where will the money come from?"
To this my friend said: "Let me take you to see where I am building. If you like it, I'll let you have an apartment right away. I shall also make it easy for you to pay in slow installments."

This proposition, coming at such an unexpected moment, was indeed a sign that my prayers were being answered. We went together that day to inspect the site. I liked it very much, so we made a deal and I acquired an apartment, knowing it to be a gift from my Lord. It is there that I am writing these lines, asking blessings for my children.

While making the Pilgrimage to Mecca that same year, my companions and I settled for the night at a hotel in Baghdad. In a dream, I saw a beautiful baby boy, like a ball of light, being laid in my arms.
A voice said, "This is the son you prayed for. Give him the name Muhammad Juneyd."
I was then given four dolls. "What are these?" I asked.
"These are your grandchildren, the children of your son-to-be, Muhammad Juneyd," the voice replied.

When I opened my eyes, it was time for the early morning prayer. I told my fellow pilgrims about the dream, and shared the good news that I was going to have a son. That same day, I wrote to my wife in Istanbul, telling her to expect a boy and to name him Muhammad Juneyd, in case I should not return home safely. As it turned out, twenty days after my safe return a baby boy was born, and I gave him the name Muhammad Juneyd. I am thus in a position to testify from my own experience to the miraculous power of Telli Baba.

It is widely known, that a wealthy Christian girl, considered incurably ill by the doctors, was restored to health after a dream had prompted her to visit Telli Baba's tomb. She demonstrated her gratitude by having the Saint's mausoleum repaired. Local people also tell of the high-ranking naval officer whose dream led him to restore and reopen the mausoleum and mosque, after they had suffered the ravages of war and revolution. Fountains for ablutions and other amenities have also been provided by various grateful individuals. May the Lord be pleased with all those responsible for these good works.

There are many traditional tales about Telli Baba. He is said to have been in the ranks of the Saints who took part in Fatih Sultan Mehmet's conquest of Istanbul in 1453. According to another tradition, it was in the reign of Sultan Mahmud, during the Russian attacks on the entrance to the Black Sea, that Telli Baba and his dervishes, on an expedition to fight the enemy, came to the spot where his mausoleum now stands. There he established his lodge, guarding a strategic point on the Straits.

People believe that his spirit will continue to protect the beautiful city of Istanbul until the Resurrection. At one period, civilians were denied access to the mausoleum, since the region had been declared a military zone, but it was reopened as a result of a dream experienced by a person of authority.

This is how Telli Baba acquired his name. The Sheikhs of one branch of the Qadiri Order were in the habit of embellishing their "crowns" - the distinctive turbans of their Order - with the silver thread (in Turkish - tel; telli therefore means silver-threaded) normally used to decorate the head-dress of a bride. Thus in the spiritual realm they became brides to their Lord. Because this noble Sheikh followed the practice of embellishing his "crown", he was called Telli Baba and thus people tended to forget his real name.

In this connection, we may recall that the night when the venerable Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi passed onto the Realm of Beauty is referred to as the "Bridal Night," meaning the night he was united with his Lord. Various symbols are to be found in the garments worn by the noble Sheikhs, but only the initiated understand their significance.

Telli Baba is neither the first nor the last of the Saints to have his real name forgotten and to be remembered by his nickname. Before the Ataturk Boulevard was opened, there were two open-roofed mausoleums outside the Unkapani Gate in the walls of Istanbul. The

one on the right was known as "Horoz Dede," while that on the left was called "Eskiji Baba."

Evliya Chelebi, author of the famous "Book of Travels," was unable to give the true identity of these characters. He tells us that the former, whose real name had already been forgotten in his lifetime, was a dervish of Sheikh Ahmad Yasavi, and that he came from Khurasan with Saint Haji Bektash, joining Sultan Mehmet the Conquerer in the attack on Istanbul.

Every morning until the city was captured, he would rouse the troops by flapping his arms like wings as he crowed, "Arise, O heedless ones!" This earned him the name Horoz Dede (Grandfather Cock). It is interesting that the tomb of Horoz Dede is regularly visited by Christians as well as Muslims. His neighbor, Eskiji Baba, is likewise remembered only by his nickname, which means "old-clothes man."

Another Saint whose true identity is unknown is Tezveren Dede, (Grandfather Quick-to-Give). He lies buried in the street beside the mausoleum of Sultan Mahmud, behind the building now occupied by the District Office of Eminönü.

Among the Unknown Saints are:

Gül Baba (Father Rose), buried inside the Rose Mosque in Jibali.

Tokmak Dede (Grandfather Mallet), whose tomb is in the vicinity of Ayvansaray.

Tuz Dede (Grandfather Salt), in the Uzunja Ova quarter in Beshiktash.

Düğümlü Baba (Father Knotty), opposite the Congregational Mosque of Sultan Ahmet.

Göbek Dede (Grandfather Potbelly) and Kecheli Dede (Father Felt), near the Edirne Gate.

Yatağan Baba (Father Scimitar) near Egrikapi.

Koyun Dede (Grandfather Sheep), who is buried at the back of a tavern in the Galata fish market.

Unfortunately, many such tombs have completely disappeared.

It is certain that Telli Baba is numbered among the Friends of Allah. As we have tried to make clear, the miraculous gifts of the Saints are genuine, as is their power of intercession, which remains effective after their departure to the Realm of Beauty. Prophets, Saints and Martyrs do not die. One should not call them dead for they are alive. They are nourished in the presence of their Lord. It is beyond the scope of our limited intellect and perception to comprehend their attainments in that life of the spirit, to which the Holy Quran bears witness.

We have to emphasize that the visitation of tombs is a custom sanctioned by the Prophet's example, for he used to visit the tombs. Externally, one tomb looks much the same as another, but depending on the human being buried there, they vary in quality and significance.

Compare the mausoleum of Sultan Mehmet the Conquerer with that of a minor official. Consider the Prophets and Messengers. Which of them has a resting place to compare with that of our Master, the Glory of the Universe? Of what other blessed station has it been said: "The space between my resting place and my pulpit is one of the Gardens of Paradise?" There is clearly a vast difference between the tomb of an ordinary person and the tomb of a Friend of Allah.

In the light of all we have presented above, let us look at the rather thoughtless notice that is affixed to all mausoleums by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Turkey.

Respected Visitor

The visitation of tombs is a noble custom in our religion. The visitor should give the salutation of peace, then recite part of the Quran for the soul of the dead. It is forbidden in our religion to burn candles, to tie on pieces of cloth, to affix good-luck charms, to throw coins, to sacrifice animals, and to ask favors directly of the dead. The true purpose of visiting tombs is to make oneself aware of the inevitability of death.

Office of the Mufti of Istanbul

We must be grateful to Allah the Exalted that neither the Ministry of Religious Affairs nor the Office of the Mufti of Istanbul have totally prohibited the visitation of tombs. They have at least acknowledged this practice to be a noble religious custom. May Allah be our refuge, lest they ever completely ban the visitation of tombs!

We would like to beg the indulgence of those responsible for this kind of notice, by asking this: You say that the salutation of peace should be given when one visits a tomb, but how do we salute the "dead?" What would be the point of it?

In accepting that the greeting of peace should be given, are you not in fact admitting that they are actually alive?

Allah tells us in His Holy Quran that the epithet "dead" must never be applied to martyrs. Those struggles in which the martyrs sacrifice themselves are defined by the blessed Prophet as the Greater Warfare, which is the struggle against the lower self, and is fought by the Prophets and Saints with the Sword of Love - and the Lesser Warfare, which is against the unbelievers, and is fought with actual weapons. Allah the Glorious says:

Do not call those who were killed on the Path of Allah "dead." They are alive, but you do not know the modality of their lives. (2: 154)

Therefore, how can the Ministry and the office of the Mufti have the audacity to speak of them in these terms? Only sinners, rebels or unbelievers may be referred to as "dead," for they are so described in the Holy Quran.

Our blessed Master tells us, *True believers do not die, rather they are transported from the temporal realm into the realm of perpetuity.*

They taste death, then enter into true being. The term "dead" is used for unbelievers and animals, yet even they are not completely extinguished at death. At the Resurrection, the unbelievers will be condemned to the Fire, and shall remain eternally in Hell.

But those who disbelieve, and deny Our revelations, they are owners of the Fire, in which they shall abide forever. (2:39)

Animals will return to dust after the Reckoning, and the unbelievers will wish they could share the same fate.

On the day when a man will behold what his hands have brought forth, and the unbeliever will cry: 'If only I were mere dust!' (78:40)

In the following Hadith, recorded by al-Bukhari, we have clear proof that unbelievers actually hear what is said to them after death:

> According to Abu Talha, the most noble and blessed Messenger came around midnight to the deep pit in which the Muslims, outnumbered yet victorious at the Battle of Badr, had buried the corpses of the fallen polytheists of the Quraysh tribe.

The Prophet called out, *"O Tiba ibn Rabia, O Shayba ibn Rabia, O Umayya ibn Khalaf, O Abu Jahl ibn Hisham ... You who lie in this deep pit! Do you now see that Allah's promise comes true? Had you obeyed Him and obeyed me, His Messenger, you would not have come to this. I have seen the reality of what my Lord promised to me."*

The companions were amazed. *"O Messenger of Allah, are you really talking to corpses? Do they hear what you are saying to them?"*

Our blessed Master replied: *"My companions, I swear by the One who holds Muhammad's soul in His hand, they hear my words better than you."*

As it is established by the Prophet that slain unbelievers hear more clearly than the living, it is truly offensive that the Ministry of Religious Affairs refers to the Friends of Allah as "dead." They rightly state that burning candles for the dead is not part of our religion, otherwise every Muslim would be lighting candles at the graves of his loved ones. It is precisely because the noble beings who lie in the mausoleums are not "dead," that oil lamps and candles have been lit for them throughout the centuries.

If this practice were forbidden, the wise chief Counsels (Sheikh al-Islam) of the Ottoman Empire, whose legal rulings are in effect to this day, would have issued a prohibition. Moreover, the Bureau of Pious Endowments would not have allocated funds for this purpose for all these centuries.

It would be interesting to know whether the Ministry of Religious Affairs has ever seen the relevant documents and official records, available in any library for the serious researcher. Have they not heard that Sultan Ahmet I made a pious endowment of sixteen measures of rose oil daily, to replace olive oil in the lamps at the resting place of our blessed Master the Prophet?

As for the practice of tying pieces of cloth, or affixing tokens, this is merely a reminder for the believer of the vow made to Allah the Exalted, and is not an act of worship. It would be absurd to suppose that coins dropped in mausoleums are meant to be taken and spent by the occupant of the tomb! This practice is simply an expression of the Islamic principle of mutual assistance. The minor expenses of maintenance are covered and the giver reaps the spiritual benefit.

Since it is permissible to greet the occupant of the tomb, and to recite the Holy Quran for his soul, why would it not be permissible, for the pleasure of Allah, to dedicate to him the spiritual reward of an animal sacrifice?

Spiritual benefit is derived from good deeds on behalf of martyrs, and also the humbly departed. Why should it not be permissible to distribute water, provide food, give alms, plant trees, dig wells, establish hospitals and mosques, make books available to poor students, or donate to the needy the meat of animals sacrificed to please Allah? Which of these charitable acts is contrary to our religion?

Of course, visiting a tomb or mausoleum, directing worship to the Saint himself, is tantamount to the sin of associating partners with Allah. All true believers are absolved of such error. Should a person commit this sin, he would destroy his faith through polytheism. May Allah protect us!

Unbelief and polytheism can surely not be ascribed to those who address requests directly, though not as a mode of worship, to a noble soul who has attained the Seat of Truthfulness, in the eternal realm, no more than they could be attributed to one who asks a worldly favor of another, especially if that person is a righteous fellow Muslim. The learned, the wise and the people of God have always considered it permissible to seek the

mediation not of the "dead" but of souls of established spiritual virtue.

It is quite certain that we may legitimately address requests to any person, whether in this world or the Next, though the granting of that request depends on the consent of Allah. As for those who are highly developed, they ask nothing of any person, neither of those living in this world nor of those in the eternal abode. If they ask for anything at all, they ask it of none but their exalted Lord.

For such noble beings, even to ask implies not being satisfied with what the Truth bestows and sees fitting for them, and they say: *"We are content with our Lord; let it be as He wills!"*

Moreover, at this station of intimate friendship, they feel ashamed about wanting anything from the Truth. When Abraham, the intimate Friend of Allah, was thrown into the fire by Nimrod, he did not want help from anyone and was even too ashamed to supplicate to Allah Most High. As a sign of His Friendship, God converted the fire into Divine Light, and thus manifested Himself to His Friend who had not asked anything from Him.

Call upon Me and I will answer you! (40:60)

One might ask why did the Prophet Muhammad supplicate, he who was the most intimate Friend of Allah? The supplications of the Prophet are a function of his Messengership and are for the education of his community. In reference to the qualities of his Sainthood, the Prophet said: *"None but my Lord can know the states that I experience. They are a secret between Allah Most High and myself."*

The great Prophets have the aspects of Sainthood and Messengership. As Saints, they face Allah, and by means of their Sainthood they receive directly from the Truth without intermediary. As Messengers, whatever

they receive from the Truth, it is their duty to transmit to their communities, and thus they face the people. The aspect of a Prophet's Sainthood is superior to the aspect of his Messengership. However it must be understood that Messengers are always superior to Saints.

The miracles of Saints, whether they manifest in this world or the Hereafter, belong to the person and glory of the Prophet they follow. A perfect believer who accepts the miracles of the Saints of the Children of Israel, as mentioned in the Sura Naml, should also accept the miracles of the Saints of the Holy Prophet, the Mercy to the Worlds.

These Saints among the community of Muhammad manifest extraordinary states, in popular language called 'miracles,' which all belong to the honor and glory of the Master of the Prophets, the support of the Saints and Pure ones.

The progress of civilization among the Community of Invitation (all non-Muslims) is connected to the glory of the blessed Prophet. The honor of the miracles of the other Prophets and Messengers also belong to Muhammad. The blessed Adam is the Father of Bodies and the blessed Muhammad is the Father of Souls. Those who strive to understand this truth will attain to happiness in both worlds.

The following Islamic authorities have recommended the visiting of the tombs of martyrs and Saints:

Sayyid Sheikh Hasan al-Shadhili, himself a great Saint and founder of the Shadhili Order, said: "When a believer visits the tomb of a Saint, the Lord informs that Saint of the visit and he accepts the visitor's salutation of peace. If the visitor remembers Allah (Dhikr), the Saint joins him in his remembrance." He also tells us that one should be attentive and calm when visiting a Saint's tomb, hoping that Allah the All-Glorious will grant requests made of Him in honor of the Saint.

Imam al-Ghazali gives rational and traditional proof of the benefits received by many through the visitation of tombs.

Fakhr al-Razi, in a work entitled "Matalib," explains the great benefits to be derived from visiting the tombs of Saints.

Sheikh Abu-l-Mawahib confirms the merit of visiting the tombs or mausoleums of Saints, citing the actual experiences of individuals renowned for their righteousness and advanced spiritual development. He relates the following incident, which led a certain Ghawthi Effendi to renounce his narrow Wahhabi views, repenting his failure to realize that the intimate Friends of Allah are spiritually alive in their resting places:

After performing his Pilgrimage to Mecca the Ennobled one year, Ghawthi Effendi joined a caravan bound for Medina the Illumined, to fulfill the example of Allah's Messenger. His camel developed a sore on its back, and the wound grew bigger as the journey progressed. When the travellers arrived at Medina's Manaha Square, the camel waited until its saddle was removed before breaking its halter and running off at high speed.

The caravaneer and his men ran after it, followed by Ghawthi Effendi. The camel cut a straight path through to the gate of the Prophet's Mosque, and made his way directly to his purified Resting Place, where it knelt on its front knees stretching its head toward the grille. Tears streamed from the camel's eyes as it groaned with pain. The caravaneer, his men and Ghawthi Effendi arrived breathless. They were speechless with amazement at the sight that met their eyes.

Ghawthi Effendi began to weep. Holding his head, he cried: "Shame on me, shame on me! I had to learn my lesson from this poor beast, after being misled by a

false and destructive doctrine. A mere animal has understood what I failed to grasp, the Mercy to all mankind (the Prophet) is actually alive."

Shedding tears of remorse, he repented at once, prayed for forgiveness, and took refuge in the generous compassion of the noble Messenger.

Saint Abd-ul-Qadir Gaylani writes in a book entitled "Ghunyatu-t-Talibin": "One should make frequent visits to the tombs of martyrs and make many supplications there, for these are readily accepted and answered."

Imam Nawawi says: "Visiting the tombs of martyrs is a recommended practice."

Ibn Hajj says, in his book called, "Madkhal": "When a visitor hopes for a Saint's blessing, the Saint mediates between that visitor and the Divine Truth."

Ali al-Qari, in a commentary on a book called, "Hisn al-Hasin," gives a lengthy account of the benefits to be derived from visiting the tombs of Saints, and of presenting one's supplications there.

The revered Nablusi tells us: "Saints do not lose their miraculous powers when they pass on into the Realm of Beauty."

In the light of the profound research devoted to this subject by the noble scholars and Sheikhs of Islam, one must conclude that our Lord, the Most Generous of the most generous, will certainly not reject the mediation of a Saint, His intimate Friend, on behalf of a humble and contrite supplicant who presents his wishes and aspirations at the tomb. We in Istanbul are especially blessed with Allah's bounty, for our noble city contains countless holy sites.

Holy Sites

Where Supplications are Accepted

The Mosque of Ayyub Sultan and the mausoleum of the venerable Khalid ibn Zayd.

The Mosque and mausoleum of Sultan Mehmet the Conquerer.

The Mosque of Koja Mustafa Pasha and the mausoleum of Sünbül Sinan.

The Mosque of Janfeda and the mausoleum of Saint Sayyid Sultan Muhammad Nureddin al-Jerrahi, in Karagümrük.

The Mosque of Ramazan Effendi and the mausoleum of the venerable Ramazan Koja Mustafa Pasha.

The Mosque of Merkez Effendi and the mausoleum of Merkez Musa Muslihiddin, outside the Mevlana Gate.

The mausoleums of the venerable Sayyid Sayfullah and Sayyid Nizameddin, inside and outside the Silivri Gate respectively.

The mausoleum and cell of Sayyid Hasan Hüsameddin Ushshaqi in Kasimpasha.

The Mosque and mausoleum of Aziz Mahmut Hüdai near the ruined tomb in Üsküdar.

The mausoleum and cell of Ümm Sinan, at Oluklu Bayir in Eyup.

The mausoleum of Sayyid Selami in Kisikli.

The Mosque and mausoleum of Karaja Ahmet.

The Mosque and mausoleum of Ismail Rumi, on the hill of the Qadiris in Beyoğlu.

The Mosque and mausoleum of Yahya Effendi, in Beshiktash.

The mausoleum of Hajji Emin Tokadi, in Zeyrek.

The Mosque and mausoleum of Telli Baba, between Sariyer and Rumeli Kavağı.

The tomb of Mustafa Bekri al-Khalwati. Those who visit this tomb will attain their desired station.

There are many more noble sites like these in Istanbul, but we do not propose to enumerate them all in this present work.

How To Conduct Oneself When Visiting The Tombs of Saints

Formulate the intention that the visitation will be for Allah's sake.

Do not set out without having performed a ritual ablution.

On the way there, keep your eyes away from things forbidden by Allah, and protect your heart from bad thoughts.

Remember and glorify Allah all the way to the tomb.

Along the way, engage in righteous acts such as giving alms to the poor for Allah's sake, helping the needy, making charitable donations to worthy causes, feeding stray animals, providing crumbs for the birds in the winter, watering flowers and planting trees.

Repent and pray for forgiveness for the sins and offences you have committed, and be sure to utter many Affirmations of Divine Unity. This is the best way to ensure the speedy granting of your request.

On reaching the sacred tomb, begin with the salutation: "Peace be upon you, O servant of Allah, son of Allah's servant, O intimate Friend of Allah!"

Then recite Sura Ikhlas three times, the Fatiha and Ayat-ul-Kürsi once. Recite ten noble benedictions upon the Prophet, dedicating the spiritual reward for this to our blessed Master, and to all the Prophets, the people of the Prophet's household, his companions and helpers, and to the souls of all the Saints. Only then should you state your request of Allah in honor of the Saint.

Then you should enter the mosque to pray with the congregation if it is the time for one of the five set prayers. Otherwise, perform two cycles as a greeting to the mosque, followed by two cycles of prayer dedicated to the occasion. After the prayers, you should make a supplication asking that your request be promptly fulfilled.

You should also mention the vow you intend to carry out, should your wish be granted, to please Allah and as a gift to the soul of the Saint. This might be that you will make a sacrificial slaughter, recite the entire Quran or have it recited, or make a charitable donation.

If you visit the mausoleum of Telli Baba, you should take one or two silver threads from the revered Saint's tomb before returning home. These threads should be carefully preserved. Then, if your wish is granted, you must fulfil your vow without delay. Buy a quantity of new silver thread, add this to the pieces you originally took, and leave them at the tomb.

Finally, go into the mosque and perform a prayer of two cycles in gratitude, to perpetuate the bounty or good fortune you have received. One should never forget this.

Glory to your Lord,
The Lord of Glory beyond description.
And peace upon the Messengers.
Praise be to Allah,
Lord of All the Worlds.

GLOSSARY

A general guide to references indicated by asterisks (*) and arranged according to page number.

2. *Bridge and Balance
The Bridge is the Ṣirāṭ (literally roadway) by which righteous believers shall safely cross over the fire of Hell to reach Paradise. It is traditionally described as "finer than a hair and sharper than a sword." Safe passage is assured for those whose good deeds will have weighed heavier in the Balance (Mīzān) on the Day of Judgment.

5. *Mighty Throne
Allah is "Lord of the Mighty Throne (ʿArsh)" (Quran 9:181). The Divine Throne is supported by the Splendid Pedestal* (Kursī).

*Ultimate Lotus Tree
Mentioned twice in the Quran (53:14,16) in connection with the Heavenly Ascension of the blessed Prophet Muhammad. According to Tradition, this Lotus Tree (Sidra) marked the extremity (al-Muntahā) beyond which the angel Gabriel could no longer escort the blessed Prophet, who continued alone from that point.

*Prosperous House
According to traditional accounts, the blessed Prophet visited this heavenly counterpart of the Sanctuary at Mecca, in the course of his Ascension (Miʿrāj). In Arabic, it is called al-Bayt al-Maʿmūr.

*Aḥmad
One of the names of the blessed Prophet Muhammad. It means "Most Praiseworthy." (Quran 61:6.) The blessed Prophet is frequently referred to as the Beloved of Allah, especially in Sufi literature.

8. *Saints
Though commonly translated 'Saint,' the Arabic term walī (plural: awliyā) actually means Guardian, Protector, Friend. Where the English word 'Saint' is used in an Islamic context, it should be understood that it does not connote formal canonization.

10. *Rābi°a al-°Adawīya
Celebrated woman Saint of Baṣra, where she died and was buried in 185/801. Renowned for her absolute devotion to the love of Allah.

12. *(Ibn) Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj
Mystic and theologian, who was born in Persia but wrote in Arabic. His ecstatic utterances led to his trial and execution (martyrdom in the eyes of his disciples) in Baghdad in 309/902.

13. *Yunus Emre
Turkish Sufi renowned for his mystical poetry (d. 740/1339).

17. *Ṭarīqa
Arabic term meaning "road, way, path." When it occurs in Sufi contexts, it is often translated "Mystical Path" or "(Islamic) Mysticism." When qualified by the name of a particular Sufi fraternity, it is translated "Order."

23. *Niyazi Misri
A Turkish Sheikh of the Khalwatīya (Halveti) Order, and an outstanding mystical poet (d. 1105/1694)

*Prophet George
The Christian Martyr, Saint George (Jirjis) is regarded by some Muslims (at least) as one of the Prophets who preceded the blessed Muhammad.

*Imām Ḥusayn
Noble grandson of the blessed Prophet Muhammad, and younger brother of the venerable Ḥasan. Martyred at Karbalā in 61/680.

28. *Sharī°a, *Ṭarīqa, *Ḥaqīqa, *Ma°rifa
There are no satisfactory one-word equivalents for these terms in English. Translators must either have recourse to potentially misleading renderings like Sacred Law (for Sharī°a), Mystical Path (for Ṭarīqa), Direct Experience (for Ḥaqīqa), and Gnostic Wisdom (for Ma°rifa), or follow the practice adopted here, namely use the Arabic terms in transliteration, relying on the text and notes to explain their content.

The respective meanings of Sharī°a and Ṭarīqa, in particular, are thoroughly discussed and explained in this work, as are their mutual relationship and historical background. Readers who are interested in more detailed study of the Sharī°a itself may be referred to the extensive literature, both popular and scholarly, that is readily available in libraries under the heading "Islamic Law."

Further explanation of the terms Ḥaqīqa and Ma°rifa, which receive rather less attention here may be obtained from more comprehensive works on Sufism. Meanwhile, it may be helpful to note that:

> Ḥaqīqa means "Reality" or "Direct Experience of Reality," as opposed to a theoretical apprehension thereof.
> Ma°rifa conveys a range and depth of meaning that may be hinted at by expressions like: "Intimate Knowledge of the Truth; Mystical Intuition; Perfect Wisdom; Spiritual Insight; Gnosis."

31. Ḥadith
Sayings attributed to the blessed Prophet Muhammad.

32. *Uways al-Qaranī
A Yemeni, contemporary of the blessed Prophet Muḥammad. Although the two never met, Uways was aware of the Prophet's mission, and the Prophet is said to have known of Uways and his saintly character.

*Ḥasan al-Baṣrī
A Saint and scholar of such outstanding wisdom and piety that he is generally regarded as one of the most important figures in the religious history of Islam (d. 110/728).

*Ḥabīb al-°Ajamī.
A Persian disciple of Saint Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Renowned for his piety and asceticism (d. 119/737).

*Dāwud al-Ṭā'ī
An early Sufi master (d. 165/781). He links Habīb al-°Ajamī and Ma°ruf al-Karkhī.

*Ma°ruf al-Karkhī
An early Sufi master, whose teaching emphasized generosity and devotion. (d. 200/815 in Baghdad).

*Sarī as-Saqaṭī
Teacher of the venerable Junayd al-Baghdādī.

*Junayd al-Baghdādī
One of the greatest Sufi Saints, through whom many Orders trace their line of descent (d. 298/910).

*Qāḍī Wāḥidu'ddin
A later Sufi Saint (5th Islamic century).

34. *Murshid
Translated "spiritual guide" for want of a more satisfactory equivalent. In a Sufi context, the Murshid is guide or director of the disciple's progress to mature humanity: moral, intellectual, religious and spiritual progress.

45. *'Child of the Heart'
Sufi aspirants report that the conception and birth of this mystical 'child' is often literally revealed to them in their dream experiences.

49. *Quṭb
Literally "Axis; Pivot; Pole" (in the astronomical, geographical or electrical sense of "pole"). The translation "Cardinal (Saint)" for the Sufi Quṭb should be understood in the literal sense (cardinal: that on which something hinges, from Latin 'cardo', a hinge).

53. *Arwāh
The Arabic term rūḥ, (plural: arwāḥ), may be translated "spirit" or "soul" according to context. In some cases, "spirit-soul" might be the most satisfactory rendering.

56. *The Twelve Imams

1) ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, The Triumphant Lion of Allah, may Allah ennoble his countenance.

2) Imām Ḥasan, may Allah be pleased with him.

3) Imām Ḥusayn, The Prince of Martyrs, may Allah be pleased with him.

4) Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn.

5) Muḥammad Bāqir.

6) Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq.

7) Mūsā al-Kāẓim.

8) ʿAlī ar-Riḍā.

9) Muḥammad Jawād Taqī.

10) ʿAlī an-Naqī al-Hādī.

11) Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī.

12) Muḥammad al-Mahdī.

May Allah be pleased with them all.

The Fourteen Innocents

1) Muḥammad al-Akbar ibn ʿAlī al-Murtaḍā.

2) ʿAbdullāh ibn Ḥasan.

3) ʿAbdullāh ibn Ḥusayn.

4) Husayn ibn Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn.

5) Qasim ibn Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn.

6) ʿAbdullāh ibn Jaʿfar aṣ-Sādiq.

7) Yaḥyā ibn Jaʿfar as-Sādiq.

8) ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad Bāqir.

9) Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad Bāqir.

10) Ṣāliḥ ibn Musa al-Kāẓim.

11) Tayyar ibn Mūsā al-Kāẓim.

12) Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad Taqī.

13) Jaʿfar ibn Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī.

14) Qāsim ibn Muḥammad al-Mahdī.

May Allah be pleased with them all.

The author of this work, Sheikh Muzaffer Ozak, passed from the visible world in 1985. He is a Wali-ullah, or intimate friend of Allah, as saints are referred to in Islamic tradition.

For twenty years, Sheikh Muzaffer Ozak al-Jerrahi was the Sheikh of the Halveti-Jerrahi Order of Dervishes. A prolific author in the Turkish language, Sheikh Muzaffer was well-known for his sage advice, spiritual counseling and his masterly dream interpretations.

He was educated by a succession of wise and learned teachers who instructed him in all branches of the Islamic tradition. He became Muezzin and later took the office of Imam in many of the mosques of Istanbul.

He later retired from the office of Imam and preached a sermon on Fridays at a mosque near the famous Istanbul book market, where he owned a shop specializing in antique and religious books.

Extensive travels took him not only on Pilgrimage to Mecca (eleven times) and throughout the Middle East, but also to the Balkan countries, Western Europe and the Unites States of America where his deep love for the American people was expressed in his founding of numerous branches of the Halveti-Jerrahi Order.

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